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FIGURE OF AN ELEGANT, TOWER MONK.

[unintelligible]

[unintelligible]

# IN JAPAN

## PILGRIMAGES TO THE SHRINES OF ART

BY

GASTON MIGEON

CONSERVATOR OF THE LOUVRE MUSEUM

*TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY FLORENCE SIMMONDS*

*WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS*



London  
William Heinemann

1908

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FUGEN ON AN ELEPHANT. TOKIO MUSEUM.  
Frontispiece] [see p. 182.

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*RG*



FIGURE OF AN EARTHEN, TIBET MONK.

London: 1871.

PLATE 11.



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179

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## INTRODUCTION

**I**N spite of the fact that Japan has been more fully described than most countries, it is perhaps one of those we know the least, so little have we been able to penetrate into its more intimate life. Japan, indeed, has a rare modesty which forbids her to yield her delicate soul to the first comer. It is not enough to visit her as a globe-trotter, to note certain aspects and smile at them. This was the programme of a whole school of superficial and strangely unintelligent writers, with whom we must class the novelists, with the one exception of the brilliant Lafcadio Hearn. The Japanese do not attach more importance to them than they deserve; they are above such petty ironies.

At this crisis in their history, when they have staked their existence as a nation in full confidence of their ability to trace out new courses, it is interesting to study the new ideals of life they have formed. In the current that is bearing them along, will they abandon all the traditions of their race, their secular habits, and the refined pleasures which have delighted so many genera-

tions? Will their souls lose that exquisite delicacy, which is like the bloom of the fruit? What will be left of the Japan of the past? Above all, will their art, which had felt the distant influences of the West long before recent events, reveal to us a beauty we divine without knowing it, in the mysterious shadow in which its great manifestations have hitherto been veiled? Final and agitating question, to which no traveller has as yet brought a decisive answer. It was this last consideration which determined me to go and spend a few autumn months in Japan. I hoped thus to penetrate the secret, and try to give its ancient art the position it deserves to occupy in that dream of beauty which other nations have sought to express.

It is in truth a strange thing that at the moment when Western archæology has unravelled so many knotty problems, and cast some light upon the origin of our European arts, this page of art-history should remain a blank, and that the last art we have still to know should be the one that no one cares to study zealously. It is no less great than the others; its sculpture and painting, though they have not embraced everything, have equalled, in some of their highest manifestations, the great masterpieces of Egypt, Greece, France, and Italy. Averse from the study of the nude, and lacking a hard material such as marble or stone, its statuary, working with painted or lacquered wood, has created divine figures with a depth of idealism probably unique, and represented its priests and bonzes in prayer or medita-



tion with a force of expression, a keenness of characterisation positively startling. The light and supple stuffs under which the free limbs of the Japanese move harmoniously naturally offer to their sculptors rich folds among which their researches in the rendering of drapery discovered arrangements as beautiful as any to be found in Greek or French sculpture. Its painting, exclusively religious in the beginning, created such a noble image of Divinity, that no other artists have ever so made use of the human figure to ennoble, purify, and raise it to the mystical idea they sought to express. This is so true that no art may be more fitly called ideal than theirs. Their dainty methods of painting with body-colour on a surface so soft and delicate as silk achieved miracles of exquisite colour-harmonies, in which the splendour of gold cunningly divided into thin fine lines is mated with the softest pinks, the rarest greens, and the subtlest violets. No painting, we may say, is less heavy and laboured; none is more immaterial.

Japan received from China the principles of that Buddhist art which she herself had borrowed from India, just as she had borrowed her religion, her morals, her philosophy, and her writing. Embassies and pilgrimages were the vehicles of these multiple influences; and it was through them that in the course of eight centuries Japan received with fervour so many monuments of Chinese art which her emperors, her nobles, and her temples absorbed, and which they have reverently preserved to the

present day, whereas in China itself, social upheavals, such as the Mongol invasion, were apt to treat the works of previous dynasties with scanty respect. When the study of Chinese painting is seriously undertaken—and it is one of the finest chapters in the history of art—Japan will offer the best field for research. It will be found that Japan, in bringing her delicate spirituality and her tenderness of sentiment into the dream of the Divine materialised by her painters, only followed the example of China; but this *alma mater*, who revealed beauty to her, as Greece and Rome initiated the Western civilisations, conceived of it in a more virile fashion, in more grandiose visions, and evolved more vigorous methods of expression. Can it be doubted for a moment that the Song dynasty, from the tenth to the twelfth century, possessed famous painters who had the same conception of landscape as our moderns, and endeavoured to render the states of the atmosphere, the changeful play of light, the drama of storm and tempest? that in Europe we had to wait till the seventeenth century and the Dutch painters to rival their researches, and that the old Chinese masters are indeed much closer than these to the subtleties of Claude Monet and of Whistler?

An examination of the temples, the museums, and the collections of Japan will teach us many other things as well; as, for instance, that in the midst of her preoccupations with a lofty mysticism, she had other schools of more realistic tendencies, and that in the middle of the twelfth century,

among the schools of Kasuga and Takuma<sup>1</sup> a veritable genius, Sumiyoshi Keion, painted battle-scenes, setting forth with the most amazing epic sentiment the memorable struggles between the Minamoto and the Taira; that these tendencies prevailed throughout the school of Tosa, which has been very falsely represented as fettered by a rigid aristocratic formalism, but which was, on the contrary, a vital school, intent on rendering the spectacle of life, long before the popular school of Oukiyoyé.

How is our contemporary ignorance of all this beauty to be explained? For the last thirty years Japanese art has been received with growing favour in Europe; but it has really been known only in its more trivial aspects. We have not much to learn concerning the industrial arts of Japan; but we are almost completely ignorant of her great schools of painting and sculpture down to the fifteenth century. One man alone had a true intuition of its splendour, and understood it as by instinct. Mr. Fenellosa, an American, appointed by the Japanese Government to the chair of Political Economy in the University of Tokio in 1877, had a very vivid perception of the marvellous discoveries open to his curiosity, and of the treasures obtainable without any heavy outlay, that were within his grasp. The revolution which put an end to the Shogunate and caused Japan to pass from absolute feudality to a new

<sup>1</sup> In a little book like the present we have thought it best not to encumber the text with many footnotes, and have therefore given a glossary of Japanese words at the end.



régime which was soon to become parliamentary, had impoverished the Daimios and notably the Samurais. Many old family-treasures were dispersed, and in those days there were no newly enriched bankers and ship-owners to absorb them as at present. Mr. Fenellosa, aided by his friend Mr. Bigelow, was able to bring together in a few years an extraordinary collection of Chinese and Japanese paintings, destined to constitute the nucleus of the Boston Museum, which at present contains no less than five thousand objects. At a later date, some ten years ago, placing his unique knowledge at the service of Mr. Ch. Freer, a rich Detroit manufacturer, he made a second extraordinary collection of paintings at a much larger outlay—times were changed. These were offered to the American State in April 1906, accepted by Congress, and will constitute the finest museum of Far Eastern art in the world, at Washington.

Meanwhile, Europe, ill-advised, was collecting in a haphazard fashion. Anderson went to Japan, bought paintings without much discrimination, and brought to the British Museum a large but by no means flawless collection. Cernuschi bought without much artistic instinct cartloads of bronzes, making up a formidable total, in which there is but a small minority of ancient and valuable Chinese examples. The Parisian collectors, certainly the most sensitive and refined in Europe, remained ignorant of the great masterpieces which Japan preserved with jealous care. There is indeed no people among whom art, intimately



bound up with the national life, has been held in more constant honour, or has been the object of more legitimate pride. Within the last ten years fortunes have been built up in Japan which are comparable to the greatest among ourselves. Messrs. Kawasaki, Fujita, Masuda, Hara, Sumitomo, Murayama, and Ueno would never have allowed masterpieces that had been offered to them to pass into foreign hands. The great dealers of Japan are not obliged to knock at alien doors; and even setting aside those of their native land, those of the New World, where they have agents in New York and Boston, are always open to them. Japanese collectors set as high a value upon their fine national paintings as we do on ours; and they never hesitate to pay from 50,000 to 60,000 francs for these when necessary. If they sometimes have to dread American competitors, they have nothing to fear from Europe. We need not look farther for the reason of our poverty in this respect.

Poor in these great examples, we are no richer in knowledge of their history, and we continue to use the Anderson catalogue, which, though historically trustworthy, must not be implicitly accepted as far as critical pronouncements are concerned. It is disheartening to find how little progress we have made in these studies. Mr. Fenellosa, the greatest living authority on the subject, has written practically nothing, and it is doubtful whether he will ever write anything. Dr. Grosse, professor at the University of Friburg-in-Brisgau, is the person best fitted to open fire;

and France is the country from which we may expect most in this connection. The creation of an archæological institute of the Far East at Hanoï has been an important event in these studies. Under M. Foucher's cultivated guidance, signal services may be looked for from M. Pelliot in connection with China, and M. Claude Maître in connection with Japan. Will not some among the numerous pupils of the Écoles Normales, strong in their brilliant studies and their excellent methods of work, understand that, instead of keeping their eyes fixed on the school of Athens, where nothing remains for them but dry and arid essays in epigraphy, they should turn their attention to the Mussulman world and the world of the Far East, which offer them so many enigmas to decipher; that there are two schools, those of Cairo and of Hanoï, and that these avenues that will lead them to Beauty may also lead them to Honour?

What may we expect from Japan herself in this field? Archæological study is not yet organised in the island empire, and those who are interested in art development do not study it scientifically. We might reasonably hope that the young students who have attended the universities of America, Germany, France, or England would bring away good methods, enabling them to make a serious, attentive, and scientific study of their art. So far, this has not been the case. Scarcely have they returned to Japan when they are caught up into the extraordinary current of commercial activity which is carrying the whole

country alone. In Japanese art, however, as in the Japanese Museum, we witness some very striking progress in technique and artistic sentiment and spirit. Japanese sculpture, as the Tokyo Museum have demonstrated with convincing force in the fine publications *Japan's Art and its Artists*. But this is all.

We have, however, two more to mention of the modernist sculpture and painting and as few countries can boast. The French Academy has twice our numbers in painting and sculpture of the country and of the last two years has dealt with them in a volume of *Revue de l'Art et de l'Architecture*, the twenty numbers of which will shortly be commenced. It is one of the finest art publications in the world and will prove an admirable repository for the study of European art.

Here then are good things we have much to see to work. It is not enough to see the first stone of the structure. What I offer here are impressions they are sincere and come from a heart passionately attached to the treasures of this country. I have spent three unforgettable months in it and received a welcome which will always remain one of my most delightful memories. Putting politics and business aside, anxious above all to penetrate the life of the people, to admire her landscapes, and to study her art, I shall try in my brief sketches to give you some reflection of them, and to make you desirous to see it all for yourself. Japan has retained her individuality; and where she has sought to imitate us, it has been in things

she has conceived essential to her evolution. It is but a thin veil, beneath which manners and traditions have remained intangible.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have thought it might be useful to the ever-increasing numbers of visitors who explore Japan in search of novel artistic sensations to find in this little book indications they will not meet with in any guide. None of these, indeed, make any mention of the treasures of painting and sculpture preserved in the innumerable temples of the country, or the masterpieces collected in the three museums of Tokio, Kyoto, and Nara. This will justify the relatively large space devoted to the popularisation of artistic examples. Many names of artists will be mentioned concerning whom I cannot speak at any length. To understand the place they should occupy in the history of Japanese Art, I must refer the reader to the two volumes of Tei-San: *Notes sur l'Art Japonais*, Mercure de France (1905-6), the most recent elementary work on these questions. A great number of illustrative examples of Japanese art figure in the album I published on the great Parisian collections: G. Migeon, *Chefs d'Œuvre d'Art Japonais*, Paris, Longuet, 1905.



# IN JAPAN

## CHAPTER I

### *TOKIO*

History of the city—Its foundation at the beginning of the seventeenth century—Aspects of its various quarters—The interior arrangement of its houses—The Prince Royal's new palace—Canals and the Sumida—Carriages and the *djinrikisha*.

THE two great ports that give access to Japan, Yokohama and Kobé, need not detain us for a moment. They must have been charming in their time; but the vulgarity of their modern aspect as great cosmopolitan ports eager to be Europeanised, makes them odious.

Tokio is connected with Yokohama by a line of railway, and can be reached in three-quarters of an hour.

Tokio is comparatively modern. A certain Ota Dokwan built a fortress here in 1456, near the little fishing village of Yedo, in the middle of the lagoons. Hideyoshi formed a very just opinion of the strategic value of the position when he ordered his general Ieyasu to seize it, and when Ieyasu himself became Shôgun, in 1603, he made Yedo his capital.

Kyoto remained the capital of the West, where the Mikado lived shut up in his palace, in a sort of seclusion. Yedo was the capital of the East, whence the Shôgun governed the Empire. He maintained a State which eclipsed the splendour of the Imperial Court, and forced the Daimios to forsake their clans for six months of the year and live at Yedo. After the downfall of the Shôgunate in 1868 the Mikado established himself at Yedo, changing the name of the city to Tokio or Tokei, that is, Capital of the East.

Thus Tokio is little more than three centuries old, yet it would be difficult to find many traces of its original establishment. The evolution of a city in Japan and in Europe is totally different. Japanese buildings, down to the present day, have been almost exclusively of wood, and fires work such havoc among them that at the end of a century scarcely any of the original structures exist. "Fire is the flower of Yedo," says a local proverb. Nevertheless, we may rest assured that the aspect of the town has changed but little, for the Japanese are so faithful to their tradition that they rebuild houses and temples exactly on the original plans.

Accepting Tokio as it is, let us see how it appeals to us. In common with all the Japanese towns, it shows no traces of a vigorous civic existence, nor of those noble individual ambitions which in other cities urged a man, a guild, or a community, to leave behind them a durable monument in the place to which they were proud to belong. In a Japanese city everything looks as if it had

been levelled; one head was not allowed to tower above the rest. All the houses look alike from the street; there is no difference between the dwellings of rich and poor. In the former the rooms are rather larger, the woods used both for structure and decoration are rather finer in grain, more delicately worked; the mats are more closely plaited, with better straw, but the exterior is just as humble and the entrance just as modest. There is nothing in the nature of a public building, none of those town-halls and law-courts that in our ancient western cities are the centres round which a community develops its institutions. The prince alone built a fortress, sometimes a temple of a more specifically funereal character; but these were generally at some distance from the enclosed space, as at Kunoza and Nikko.

As a result, a Japanese town is extremely monotonous, and lacks all individual character, save such as is sometimes given by its situation on the banks of a beautiful river, like the Sumida at Tokio, and the Yodogawa at Osaka, or by a setting of wooded hills, such as those which encircle Kyoto. The streets are all alike, and the traveller passes along between two rows of little low houses, squeezed one against the other, the shops of which, open to the street, show a vista of successive rooms absolutely empty of furniture. At night they are closed by wooden shutters, and during the cold days of winter by sliding casements with little squares of transparent paper to give light. Panels of lacquered wood inscribed in golden characters hang perpendicularly on the outside in such a



manner that from whichever side one approaches the announcements and advertisements they bear can be read. The houses are rarely more than one storey high, and their roofs, which have the beautiful curved lines common to the Far East, are covered with grey tiles slightly enamelled with a dull glaze, and look as if they were coated with lead. Nearly all have a little garden at the back, with a few dwarf trees, a stone fountain, and some ancient boulders.

If you enter a hundred houses you seem to be repeating your visit to the first. Under the pent-house roof of a little courtyard you put off your wooden sabots or your shoes, soiled by the mud or dust of the street. Two steps give access to a little anteroom, where you leave your coat and hat. In the better-class houses, a large screen, adorned with a decorative painting, sometimes on a gold ground, conceals the entrance of the first room from the passer-by. All those you enter have very elastic mats, joined by strips of coarsely plaited stuff, spread upon the floor. These, when new, give off a scent of honey. All the rooms communicate one with another by sliding parallel panels, hung with a thick dull white paper. In wealthy dwellings, palaces, and temples, these are decorated with splendid compositions painted in body-colour and water-colour, in which the greatest artists have collaborated; these are the *fusumas*. Similar panels ranged along the walls conceal cupboards, where by day are disposed the mattresses and rugs which at night are spread upon the *tatamis*. A shallow alcove, raised one step





A VISIT AT TOKIO.



THE WALLS OF THE IMPERIAL PALACE AT TOKIO,

from the floor, the *tokonoma*, contains the *kakemono*, hanging against the wall, and the vase, in which two or three sprays of flowers or branches are arranged with a mysterious art. These are the only decorative objects in a Japanese house, where neither chairs nor tables are to be found. In a central room, communicating directly with the kitchen, which is on a lower level, are chests clamped with wrought iron and containing drawers to hold clothes, also a little low table for writing. Here the Japanese woman spends her life. She sits at her little table beside her *brasero*, on the edge of which she taps her small silver pipe to shake out the ashes, after a whiff or two of a tobacco light and fine as hair. From this point of vantage she sees everything that is going on in the house, and talks to her maids in a tone of perfect familiarity.

Some houses have an inner chamber, the *kura*, more or less large, protected from fire by thick masonry and heavy metallic doors. Here the most precious possessions are kept, *kakemonos*, lacquers, and china for the tea-ceremony.

Behind this uniformity of the Japanese house, where the taste and personality of the occupant do not seem to be revealed, as with us, in the arrangement of the interior, it is nevertheless possible to discover shades of difference, subtle as is everything in Japan: First of all, in the woods of the framework, chosen from the finest species of forest trees, timber without a flaw, in which the knots and veins have been so treated as to give the maximum effect in colour and design; then in

the ornamental woodwork of the interior, which is never overlaid by the coarse paint of the West, but displays the supple freshness of its material, modified only by the cunning tool of a craftsman who softens the angles, and contrives a play of light and shade on mouldings, the surface of which is as delicious to the touch as a delicate human skin. Or again, in the 'gracefully coffered ceilings, divided by a system of lacquered bands or by flat laths of interwoven reeds, in the imposts of the interior partitions, sometimes interrupted by exquisite wooden panels on which birds of Paradise wing their flight, mandarin ducks swim among lotus-plants, or a carp rises on the crest of a wave ; in the subtle, delicate colour of all the surroundings, the soft grey of the woods, the tawny tones of the *tatamis*, the sombre splendour of some fine lacquered panel, relieved by the dull gold of a chased metal clamp. How can I convey any idea of the dreamy delight afforded by a Motonobou, a Soami, in landscapes where velvety blacks are married to tender greys, in those *fusumas* the vast compositions of which belong to the highest regions of decorative art no less surely than the frescoes of Italy and the tapestries of France and Flanders ?

Is it possible, we may ask, that modern evolution should transform even the Japanese house, the fresh and dainty dwelling so perfectly adapted to the needs of this easily pleased people ? There are signs which almost make us fear such a consummation. Every official personage in Japan has two contiguous dwellings—a Japanese house



in which he lives, a semi-European one in which he receives. The latter, strange to say, is furnished with an utter want of taste, with old mahogany furniture of the time of Louis Philippe or Napoleon III., which European upholsterers have got rid of at a handsome profit. This seems to indicate a concession to progress on the part of the Japanese, to that progress the course of which they have determined to follow, though in their hearts they despise its manifestations. But nothing could induce them to put an iota of personal attention or effort into the business. In all this there is something of the same spirit which made one of them, in the restaurant of a European hotel, help himself to butter in imitation of the natives. He tasted it with a grimace: "Do you really like butter?" "What you take for butter," said someone to him, "is merely a horrible compound called margarine." He swallowed it, nevertheless, not wishing to appear peculiar. What, indeed, could they not be induced to do by an appeal to their vanity? If the European furniture is inevitable, may there not be some decorative architect among them who will find forms for furniture—chairs, tables, divans and carpets—which shall harmonise with the proportions, the forms, and the colours of the Japanese house?

A huge palace is rising on the hills of Akasaka: it is for the Prince Imperial. A special light railway, constructed at great expense, brings up the rarest stones and marbles for the building; thousands of workmen are employed. Mr. Katayama, a learned architect who studied at the *École des*

Beaux Arts, drew the plans and directs the works. The general style is that of Versailles—a homage to France! The greater part of the interior decoration was suggested and even provided by the great Parisian firms of Fourdinois and Hoentschell. It will be very magnificent, yet one cannot but deplore it. Could not this country have dispensed with the intrusion of a style so out of harmony with its own—this country which possesses a palace-architecture as fine as that of the Nijo or the Nishi Honganji of Kyoto?

Once outside, we must give up all idea of finding anything picturesque in the exterior of the houses, save perhaps in some of the old palaces of the Daimios, separated from the street by a wide courtyard, which is entered by an immense gate of noble proportions. The complicated roofs, with their involuted angles, seem to threaten the sky with their fierce crockets, and the heavy gates are overhung by massive pent-houses.

The old quarters are amusing, with their network of canals, the arteries of a vast organism, over which are suspended the balconies of poor houses built on wooden piles. The Nihon-bashi (Bridge of the Rising Sun) is the real commercial centre of Tokio. It was originally the starting-point of the Tokaido, the Imperial route, and it figures on the first page of the fifty-three views of the Tokaido by Hiroshighé. Here at least the unexpected angles, the quaint forms of the wooden bridges, the activity of the barges and boats which ply unceasingly between the Sumida and the town give life and movement, and create a scene of

picturesque animation. The Sumida itself is very wide where it passes through the city. It is traversed by heavily laden vessels with spreading sails, and long lines of rafts guided by boatmen with long bamboo poles, on which they thrust with their shoulders as they pass along the banks. It has lost something of its character since it has been spanned by iron bridges. Outamaro, Hiros-highé, and Toyokouni have immortalised it in their beautiful renderings of those midnight fire-work fêtes, to which the women and children brought paper lanterns hanging from long bamboo sticks.

One of the most delicious features of Japan is, that as far as externals are concerned, nothing has changed. On certain evenings, when such festivals take place, one is transported back a hundred years. Every April the crowd still gathers with the same enthusiasm on the banks of the Mukojima, to admire the blossoming cherry trees in the famous avenue along the river. For several kilometres little boards are ranged on trestles covered with mats, where the spectators sit drinking *saké* and gazing up at the flowery trees, the pure white petals of which drop in a soft snow about them.

The streets, though animated by a very active population, are not so full of colour as those of our Mediterranean East. They are much quieter, for even the Japanese of the lower orders show a self-restraint unparalleled among other nations, and it is very rarely indeed that one witnesses the quarrels and disturbances so common in Chinese towns. The houses, like the dresses of



their inhabitants, are neutral in colour, varying from grey to blue—tints which harmonise well with the diffused light and the most uncertain climate in the world. Gaiety is given to the scene by the innumerable oriflammes which float above the streets, and by the red paper lanterns printed in fine black characters which are hung on the gables of every house on all festivals ; these, in a country where amusements are so popular as in Japan, are naturally very frequent.

The artisans all work in the open, so to speak, for the Japanese house conceals nothing of its domestic life, and all the crafts are pursued with that antique simplicity which the industrialism of great cities such as Nagoya and Osaka threatens to destroy. The little trades of joinery, basket-making, leather-working, printing on stuffs and on paper, are carried on with admirable skill in full view of the passer-by. Porters pass calling out to clear the way, their burdens hanging in two baskets at each end of a long bamboo pole slung over one shoulder. People take a long time to get out of their road ; they have a dreamy air as they advance with little hurried steps, their kimonos crossed in front and sheathing their legs ; their *getas* or sabots mounted on two high strips of wood, or their sandals fastened by a thong between the great and the first toes, prevent them from walking very fast, and give them the slow, waddling gait of ducks approaching a river. But this does not prevent the Japanese woman from being a creature of incomparable charm, in her beautiful garments of silk or crape ; her handsome cloak adorned on



GENERAL VIEW OF TOKIO.





the back and sleeve with the armorial crest of her family ; her little collar of figured silk, which gives a vivid note to the neck of her kimono ; her *obi* of thick silk, tied in a great bow across her loins ; the luxury of her costume, in which she shows her taste in the choice of a fine design or a delicate colour ; her immaculate socks of padded white cotton, and her carefully dressed hair, brilliant with camellia oil and lustrous as a piece of fine lacquer.

In these streets, without pavements or side-walks, washed by frequent rains, horse-drawn carriages are rarely seen ; they are used only by members of foreign legations or officials of high rank. They are very comical in appearance drawn by little native horses, with bristling coats, rigid manes, and evil eyes, always ill-tempered, and driven by coachmen in amazing liveries, their heads crowned by a sort of mushroom covered with gaudy cotton in fine weather, and oilcloth when it rains. Beside the coachman is a groom, always ready to spring from his seat at the cross-roads without any slackening of speed, and gallop in front of the horses ; he shows an evident satisfaction in using his authority to stop the electric trams—which have to give way to horse-drawn carriages—and then in bounding up again upon his seat with the agility of a monkey.

The real conveyance, one with which it would be impossible to dispense in those extensive towns, as yet but poorly provided with mechanical means of transport, is the *djinrikisha*. Although there is a difference of opinion on this point, it seems

to have been invented by a certain American called Goble, about 1867, as a substitute for the palanquin, which had hitherto been used in Japan as in China.

It is a little tilbury, on two high wheels, with a hood, to seat one person (though there are a few larger ones which will take two). A runner harnesses himself to the shafts, and will take you about the town for hours at a steady trot, without seeming in the least distressed when he halts. He is lightly clad in short breeches and a blue cotton jacket. His bare legs, with their strongly developed muscles, have the fine lines of the antique runners. The courage, patience, and resignation of these runners are infinitely touching and pitiful ; the sweat runs down their bodies under the sun, which scorches them, or the rain, which drips from their oilskin capes. In the damp, showery night of their interminable journeys through the ill-lit streets, their lanterns hanging on the shafts like so many gaily coloured fire-flies, they splash through puddles, the mud of which slaps against their thighs ; and they count themselves happy if at the end of their day they have earned one *yen* (a little over two shillings).

## CHAPTER II

### *THE MONUMENTS OF TOKIO*

Scarcity of ancient monuments in Tokio—The temples of Shiba and the tombs of the Tokougawa Shōguns—The temple of Ueno—The temple of Asakusa—The imperial palace and its walls.

TOKIO is exceptionally poor in interesting monuments, and has none earlier in date than the dynasty of the Tokougawa Shōguns. The tombs of some few of these are in the temples of Shiba and Ueno, but the mausoleums of the founder of the Ieyas dynasty and of his grandson Iemitsu are at Nikko, and it is the monuments of Nikko which make the deepest impression on the visitor, both by their architecture and their decorative richness.

Shiba, in spite of its relative antiquity (1596), did not escape the fire of January 1, 1874, which destroyed its principal temple. Fortunately, the magnificent porch was preserved. Like all the Japanese temples, Shiba is not a single monument, but a complex agglomeration of buildings, which have been added one to another successively. Thus it is very difficult for us, accustomed to the western idea of an antique temple, a basilica or a cathedral as a harmonious whole, with



VIEW OF THE TEMPLE OF SHIGA AT UTSUNOMIYA.



THE AVENUE OF STONE LANTERNS, TEMPLE OF UENO, TOKYO,  
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is a small bronze pagoda raised on a few stone steps.

A short distance behind the principal temple of Zojoji is a little temple quite as richly decorated, called Gokoku-den, which contains the treasure of the Tokougawa: their arms are exhibited round the altar in the middle of the building; they themselves, clad in armour are seated three on either side; ranged in cupboards are various objects that belonged to them—bronze cups, pottery, coins, and reliquaries, with Buddhist statuettes.

The third portion of the temples of Shiba, into which the traveller passes next, adjoins the Gokoku-den. It is the Ten-ei-in, the mausoleums of the second, fifth, tenth, and eleventh Shōguns. The Taito-kouin, the mausoleum of the second Tokougawa, is especially interesting, for it is earlier by seventeen years than the Nikko monuments. It is one of the finest examples of architecture of the time of the Tokougawa. The proportions of the rooms, the huge columns of black lacquered wood in the first of these, the enormous gold lacquered pillars united by heavy beams in the second, and its great relative height, make them strangely impressive. The mausoleum itself stands somewhat in the background, and consists of a little octagonal monument; in the centre, on a stone lotus, stands the great funereal reliquary, also octagonal, adorned with exquisitely worked panels of gold lacquer, representing the eight legendary views of Siaō-Siang in China and Lake Biwa in Japan.

The temple of Ueno is at the other end of the town, in the midst of a wonderful old park which



POrch OF THE TEMPLE OF SHIBA AT TOKIO.



THE AVENUE OF STONE LANTERNS, TEMPLE OF SHIBA, TOKIO.





skirts a vast lotus-covered pond on a lower level, the Shinobazuno Ike. The lotus flowers are in their full beauty in August, and the populace then invades the numerous restaurants on its banks or on the outskirts of the park above it. On a little peninsula which stretches a slender foot into the water, a truly delicious site, stands a small temple dedicated to the Goddess Benten. A few hundred metres beyond, on the wide plateau on which is the park, a splendid avenue of cryptomerias, bordered by great stone lanterns presented by the Daimios in memory of Ieyasu, leads to the magnificent carved and painted wooden door of the temple. In Japan these wide avenues with stone lanterns often form triumphal ways to the temples, after the fashion of the great avenues of sphinxes leading to the Egyptian hypogea. The temple, with its elaborate decoration, is very similar to those of Shiba. An old pagoda stands near it, in a group of large trees, and hard by are also six Shôgun tombs, no less rich and magnificent than those of Shiba.

These temples of Shiba and Ueno are greatly venerated, and crowds of pilgrims visit them at certain dates in the year. But at ordinary times their distance from the centre of the town makes them solitary retreats, disturbed only by the taciturn cries of the ravens. The temple of Asakusa, on the contrary, in the populous heart of the city, dedicated to the goddess Kwannon, is a more frequented place of prayer; a much more ancient sanctuary is said to have stood on its site, but all vestiges of this were destroyed when

Iemitsu built the present sanctuary. This stands apart and without dependencies. It is an immense hall, raised some ten steps above the ground, and surrounded by a wide portico. In the interior the roof is supported by several rows of high wooden columns, and the traveller notes with astonishment innumerable paper lanterns and painted scrolls hanging from the ceiling. A barrier guards the approach to the sanctuary, where the high altars are loaded with bronze perfume-burners, lamps, vases of flowers, and bowls of fruit; at the end is the great reliquary containing the image of Kwannon herself. All around this popular temple, to which the animated crowd throngs all day long, tradespeople have set up their shops. It is the noisy centre of a perpetual *kermess*.

There are numbers of temples at Tokio; each quarter has its own, which are frequented by its devotees. Others are at a little distance from the town, and are visited at certain seasons of the year, such as Mukojima, on the farther bank of the Sumida, not far from the famous Cherry-tree Avenue. But in this case the true motive of the pilgrimage is the blossoming of the spring trees, the pleasure of going in great crowds to drink *saké* and amuse oneself at one of the charming floral fêtes of the year.

One of the most beautiful sights in Tokio, one which the traveller returns again and again to enjoy, is the wall of the Imperial Palace. Of the palace itself one can say nothing, for no foreigner can penetrate into it; the official representatives

of foreign Governments never pass beyond the reception-room to which they are admitted. The Sovereign of the Empire of the Rising Sun, who for centuries was isolated from his people, and venerated as a being both Imperial and Divine, lives in mysterious seclusion. The stirring events of the last half-century have obliged the ruler to emerge from the shadow in which his monotonous days were spent, and his person has become more familiar to his people, though it is impossible to say what his individual part has been in the extraordinary evolution of his country. His domicile is still mysterious and inviolate, and he retires to it as to an Olympus. This enigmatic dwelling provokes curiosity, and we attribute enchantments, perhaps purely imaginary, to the great gardens that stretch behind those vast walls in the middle of the Hibiya Park, where the Ministries are situated.

These walls are admirable; the long enclosure, broken perpetually by solid spurs which give them a new direction, raise their sloping curtains, made of great blocks of undressed stone, above wide moats full of water. It is truly Cyclopean architecture; and in the castles of Nagoya, Himeji, and Osaka in particular—where the generosity of the Daimios, who collaborated in the building, contributed the most formidable blocks, torn from remote mountains—we are lost in amazement at the amount of labour and the efforts required from the bands of workmen who brought them to the scene of toil. Down to the most recent times, these walls constituted a formidable defence, for the Japanese



remained in blissful ignorance of our artillery to our own days. And until the day when their respect for the past no longer induces them to spare these fortifications, they will continue to dominate the centre of the city with the proud outline of their granite masses. Whitewashed stone pavilions raise their curved roofs, bristling like the whiskers of an infuriated cat, at the angles where narrow postern gates give access to the castle, and along the parapets great evergreen pines bend and sway, taking the most unforeseen horizontal directions, the most fantastically twisted shapes, giving fancy and artistic charm to the plain, bare architecture. On bright sunny days, the capricious silhouettes of their tortuous branches are mirrored in the still waters, and on calm, moonlight nights, when the stars and the lanterns of the runners tremble in the dark and silent depths, they stretch their great muscular arms protectingly above them.



THE SACRED BRIDGE, WOOD, LACQUERED RED, LEADING TO  
THE TEMPLE OF NIKKO,



THE AVENUE OF CRYPTOMERIAS, TEMPLE OF NIKKO.





## CHAPTER III

### *NIKKO—THE MEMORIAL TEMPLES*

Forest scenery at Nikko—The cryptomeria avenues—The ascent to the temples—The walls and gates—The sanctuary and the memorial chambers.

A JAPANESE proverb says: "Never use the word magnificent until you have seen Nikko."

This was the spot chosen by the first Tokougawa Shôguns in the seventh century as the site of their mausoleums, in a splendid mountainous, woody region, which can now be reached from Tokio by rail in five hours.

There is perhaps no place in the world where Art, Nature and Faith have worked together so intimately for such harmonious ends; and here Nature is the great sovereign whose eternal splendour awes us most. Where in all the world shall we find more magnificent trees, trees whose gigantic dimensions harmonise with such nobility of bearing, such purity of form, such a splendid development of foliage, and whose immense avenues of which seem to stretch out into infinity? The air circulates so freely under the enormous vaults of their branches that the fresh vegetation of shrubs and mosses, nourished by constant moisture,

fourishes throughout the year. These splendid avenues—the Ionic columns of which stretch out in thin vistas, cross or rise in echelon, following the lines of the great flight of steps—make triumphant approaches to the places of prayer, where we evoke the pomp and glitter of bygone processions, or watch the long ranks of contemporary pilgrims.

It is under the spell of such moving impressions of nature that we approach the temples under the green radiance that filters through the lofty boughs, in an august silence unbroken by the song of any bird.

No perspective, no distant view, enables one to get a definite idea of the general effect; and it is only when the traveller finds himself at the foot of the first platform on which they stand that he is impressed by the multiplicity, the greatness, and the richness of the monuments before him.

A strange asymmetry governs the general plan: no central axis dominates the approaches and communications; the courtyards rise one behind the other, but their great gates are not so arranged as to lend to each other a beauty of perspective which no other art would have neglected. We are in the presence of a play of imagination that verges on caprice, that seems to obey no logical law, and that nevertheless creates pure beauty with the marvellous elements it brings to its work.

Legend and tradition assure us that a Shinto temple existed at Nîkko in remote antiquity, that a Buddhist temple was built there at the end of the eighth century, and that Kobo-Daishi, the most

## NIKKO—THE MEMORIAL TEMPLES 23

revered of Japanese saints, came thither at the beginning of the ninth century. But the real importance of Nikko dates from the seventh century, when the second Shōgun of the Tokougawa dynasty, in obedience to the will of his father Ieyasu, sent two officers to Nikko to choose the site of the mausoleum destined to receive the ashes of the great Shōgun, temporarily deposited in the monastery of Kunozan, near Shizuoka, on the Tokaido. The work was begun without delay in December 1616, and in May 1617 the cortège which had been to fetch the body of Ieyasu at Kunozan entered the great cryptomeria avenues of Nikko, after crossing the roaring torrent of Daiya-Gawa, by Mihashi, the red lacquered bridge, with its chased and gilded metal fittings, on the spot where the holy priest Shodo-Shonin crossed the river for the first time. Thenceforward, the passage of the bridge was only permitted to the Shōgun in person, and to the faithful who made the pilgrimage to Nikko twice a year. Its proud and graceful span, the splendour of its red lacquer and its gilded metal, give it the appearance of a jewel lying in the sombre casket of the vast green forest.

At the end of the great avenue of cryptomerias rises a massive Torii of granite; this is one of the essential features of Far Eastern architecture. Although its origin is a subject of controversy, it is probable that this must be sought in the monuments of India; it is to be found in Japan in the first Shinto temples, where the rites of the original native religion were celebrated before

the introduction of Buddhism. Originally destined to receive offerings in kind to the god, it lost its primitive intention when Buddhism was established, and in the form of a great arch of stone, or of painted wood, the two large uprights of which are connected by two horizontal beams one above the other, slightly turned up at the extremities, it does duty for a great entrance gateway, on which tablets with inscriptions are hung. To the left is a large pagoda, each of the five storeys of which support a graceful quadrangular roof, with edges and angles slightly curved, and to the right, a building, in which the image of Ieyasu will be deposited should the temple undergo restoration. A flagged path leads to a door guarded by the Niô, the two kings of gigantic stature, placed in covered loggias, with gratings to protect them from the birds; their threatening attitudes, furious eyes, convulsed mouths, clenched fists, and nervous feet, seem rather to menace than to welcome the faithful. The pillars of this first portal are richly carved with lions, unicorns, fabulous beasts, tigers, and peacocks.

It gives access to a courtyard, the first stage of that marvellous succession of buildings which constitute Nikko. It is surrounded by a wall painted a brilliant red, enclosing three little buildings containing sacred objects which belonged to Ieyasu, or are used in religious worship. At the foot of a magnificent tree is a little structure sheltering a horse, who stands always harnessed, his head turned outwards, and who receives in a manger set across the opening of his stable door



the corn and bread offered him by pilgrims. It is the steed of the god, who must always be ready in case the master's fancy should lead him forth. Not far from a cistern of holy water, hollowed in an enormous slab of granite, is a building in which the sacred Buddhist writings are preserved.

A series of steps leads to a second court, enclosed by a long stone balustrade. To the right, a tower contains the great bell, which is rung by means of a huge beam striking it horizontally like a ram, and an enormous bronze candelabrum to the left, a large bronze lantern sent from Corea, a candelabrum presented by the Dutch, and the tower containing the holy drum; on every side are handsome bronze lanterns on tall stands, offered by various Daimios. At one end of this second terrace rises the splendid temple of Yakushi, the patron saint of Ieyasu, magnificent with gold and black, and at the end appears a gate, a miracle of proportion and ornament, giving access by two or three steps to the upper terrace of the third court.

This gate, known as Yomei-Mon, is a marvel of architecture and of wood-carving; its panels are decorated with medallions of birds of prey and water-fowl. The two beautifully proportioned columns, which have preserved the soft, light patina of the original white paint, now much worn, are carved with medallions, bearing in the midst of geometrical motives and T-shaped iron clamps, tigers, whose striped coats are rendered by the ingenious use of splendid veinings in the wood;

their capitals are formed of unicorn-heads, and their architraves are boldly carved with lions.

It is in this third court that the evolutions of the priests in certain religious ceremonies take place. It contains several buildings, one which is the abode of some little female dancers, who perform the *bugawar*, or sacred dances, in return for the alms of the pilgrims; another guards the processional palanquins, which are so heavy that seventy men are required to carry them; and in a third the relics of Ieyasu are preserved. At the end is another door, the final gate of admission to the temple itself. This last courtyard—which is entered by the exquisite white door *Yumei-Mon*, described above, and quitted by a marvellous door gleaming with golden lacquer, a veritable gate of Paradise—is enclosed on all sides by a stupendous barrier, pierced with golden trellis-work, with borders of geometrical motives in colour; the face and the reverse of this magic wall has panels of wood carved and gilded in high relief, with groups of birds represented in repose or in flight. It is here one can best study the work of Hidari Jingoro, who decorated the palaces and temples of the Tokougawa with so much taste and fancy at the beginning of the seventeenth century. His two elephants and his sleeping cat are famous at Nikko. The two pillars of this extraordinary door of Karamon, made of rare woods imported from China, are carved with dragons, fruit-trees, and bamboos.

This brings us to the end of the long ascent, where from step to step, from terrace to terrace,





KARAMON PORCH, WHITE LACQUER AND GILDED METAL WORK,  
TEMPLE OF NIKKO (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY),  
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under the immense trees which raise their gigantic colonnades on every side, in the peace and seclusion which breathes from the lofty branches, we penetrate at last into the sanctuary itself, into the great temple, which is attained after long halts for prayer, a slow initiation into the essential rites.

Climbing another wide staircase, which occupies the entire width, we find ourselves in the immense hall, which may be divided into three unequal rooms by means of thin movable partitions decorated with terrific dragons painted on a gold ground. Magnificent carved or painted panels adorn the walls: crouching lions making ready to spring, painted on gold; phoenixes carved on oak; eagles or angels flying in the midst of chrysanthemums—the carved coffered ceiling imitated from that of the Ming Palace at Pekin bears the arms of the Tokougawa. In the centre, and at the back of this immense hall, four wide steps lead down into a lower chamber, where are the altars, and at the end more steps at a long grating guarding. These terminate the three mortuary chapels of Yoritomo, Ieyasu, and Iemitsu, where the sumptuous decoration of the lacquers, the paintings on gold backgrounds, and the fine ceilings, form a culmination of splendour.

Here your own generosity may procure you the privilege of entrance. Accompanied by the dry, harsh sound of the tambourine, and the wailing cry of the flute, punctuated by the guttural singing, the convulsive gasps and spasms of the reciters, a bonze comes forward to invest you with the

green silk robe of Buddhist ceremonial ; a final effort of generosity will make you the proud possessor of this. From this moment you must follow him scrupulously in all the prostrations and salutations, with forehead on earth, of which he will set the example. Striking your hands together with a sharp, dry sound, you summon the holy spirits who are to assist you ; you will thus advance crawling on hands and knees, to the table of offerings, where you will drink the sacred wine in an unbaked white earthen cup, which no other lips but yours must touch, and which you must carefully preserve, together with the round white, pink, and blue cakes, on which the seal of the Tokougawa has been stamped with a hot iron. Thus sanctified by holy rites, you will at last penetrate with bowed back into the mausoleums of the Shôguns, holding in your hand a gay paper lantern on which their glorious arms\*are outlined, and you will give a due meed of admiration to the rich arms there preserved, the boxes full of precious stuffs, the beautiful mural decorations, the lacquers, and the gold.

But you must not suppose that their mortal remains repose in these chambers. There are more stairs to climb under long porticoes, long avenues to traverse, in which you find again the shade of huge trees, the green mosses fringing old stones ; you must tread down the grasses that thrust their blades between the flagstones, sprinkled as you pass by innumerable branches dripping with dew or rain—the luxuriance of a vegetation nourished by a dampness that has no parallel in the



CARVED WOODEN PANEL, INTERIOR  
OF THE TEMPLE OF NIKKO  
(SEVENTEENTH CENTURY).



FRAGMENT OF A CARVED WOODEN PANEL, EXTERIOR OF THE  
TEMPLE OF NIKKO (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY).



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world. You will reach more solitary terraces in the heart of the woods, encircled by the dense shade of the cryptomerias, and surrounded by little grey stone walls, in the centre of which rise the huge bronze reliquaries which guard the mortal remains of the great Tokougawas, Ieyasu, and Iemitsu. The sumptuous taste and the refined delights of these great artist princes will live eternally at Nikko, in one of the most exquisite natural settings in which a work of art has ever taken substance.

## CHAPTER IV

### *KAMAKURA AND THE DAI-BUTSU*

Ancient Kamakura—Its remains—The Temple of Hachiman  
—The Dai-Butsu.

ONE of the melancholy features of walks in Japan arises from the perishable nature of its wooden architecture. Few relics of the past have escaped the destructive forces either of fire, or of the rainy climate and the damp soil. Rarely can the traveller experience those lofty emotions in which nature and history bear their part, emotions which on the banks of the Nile, in the deserts of Mesopotamia or Syria, in the plains of Anatolia, on the rocky promontories of Greece and the shores of Sicily, evoke splendid civilisations that have perished, but which live again for a moment in the shaft of a column, the line of a capital, the solid courses of a wall, the fragment of a statue which imagination easily reconstitutes at the bidding of a dream. Japan knows nothing of the poetry of ruins!

A few leagues from Yokohama, at one of the first stages of that stately Tokaido which the long processions of Daimios traversed to take their periodical tribute to the Shôgun, there stood

formerly a powerful city, of which Yoritomo made his capital at the end of the twelfth century. He had recently organised the Shôgunate (in 1192), and this feudal form of Government remained the framework of the Japanese State until 1868. In a short time the city of Kamakura underwent a prodigious extension; it had a population of over a million; it was the theatre of innumerable military revolutions; the neighbourhood of Odawara, the mighty city of the Hôjô, exposed it to frequent attacks. Typhoon and fire devastated it in 1455 and in 1526; the foundation of Yedo in 1603 destroyed its *raison d'être*; gradually it disappeared, and now nothing remains of it on the sands where it once rose.

And yet what a flower of civilisation must have blossomed here! What splendid temples Kamakura must have possessed! What workshops of marvellous artists forged those severe weapons, those swords whose simple pierced guards had such a delicacy of design, a vigour tempered by inimitable charm, and elaborated those lacquers, in which the great style of the decoration of flower and bird subdued the heavy splendour of the gold, the changeful fires of mother-of-pearl.

All this is but a memory preserved in the dead shade of a glass case. Kamakura is no more. We find but faint echoes of its past in the temples which still rise on the slopes of its green hills—the temple of Hachiman, god of war, and the temple of Kwannon, where we shall seek in vain for some trace of their primitive foundation.

The solitary relic of this past is the great Dai-

Butsu, or Buddha, whose colossal image still rises in a sequestered fold of the valley, sheltered by the green wooded hills and encircled by great pine and noble cryptomerias. Yoritomo, we are told, was impressed by the great bronze Buddha of Nara, but he died before carrying out his project of raising a similar image in his capital, Kamakura. The actual statue, cast by Ono Goroemon, dates only from 1252; it was formerly sheltered by a vast building, the roof of which rested upon six or three massive wooden pillars; the plinths are still visible. This temple was destroyed by a typhoon and was never rebuilt.

The Dai-Butsu is thirteen metres high; the head alone measures three. It is made of bronze plates cast separately, riveted together, and chased all overwards. The inside of the statue is hollow, and constitutes a little chapel.

The first impression of the Dai-Butsu is a little disconcerting, and it is necessary to return to it several times, at different hours of the day, to grasp its intimate significance and august grandeur. Perhaps profound solitude and vast spaces, where no petty details intervene between infinity and their eternal dream, harmonise with colossal isolated images of this kind. The Sphinx at the foot of the Pyramids, which gave seems to question infinity, is a far more suggestive apparition. And yet, in spite of the graceful garden that surrounds him, in spite of the circumscribed retreat which the fine lines of the gentle valley make for him, the grand silhouette of Dai-Butsu, the serene majesty of





BRONZE STATUE OF DAI-BUTSU AT KAMAKURA  
(THIRTEENTH CENTURY).



BRONZE STATUE OF DAI-BUTSU AT KAMAKURA  
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face, which reveals the pure Hindoo type, move us by the impression of deep meditation, of immeasurable dream, from which no image of the exterior world can distract him. He is not asleep, he is thinking ; his half-closed lids emit the vague lustre of two balls of pure gold. His head, heavy with thought, is slightly bent ; his back is bowed. No line of the face suggests the quiver of life, no line of the body indicates the tension of movement. His repose is so complete, his abandonment of all terrestrial preoccupations so absolute in its return to elemental forces and great essential conceptions, that even the night which comes, enveloping everything in its lethargic shadows, cannot sweep into oblivion that vast intelligence in which all pure ideas tend to be reabsorbed.

## CHAPTER V

### FUJI

The volcano—its eruptions—its present shape—its treatment by artists—How to get to it—All round the Fuji—The Lake of Hakone and Myanoshita—The small lakes—Descending the rapids of Fuji Kawa.

IF we take it from the strictly geographical point of view, the Fuji is a volcanic mountain which rears its isolated cone not far from the sea-shore, like Vesuvius or Etna. It is no longer active, but it was so at no very distant period. Japanese literature makes frequent allusions to the smoke and flames that issued from its crater. A writer of the end of the ninth century speaks of it with terror; a traveller saw the sky lighted up by its flames in 1021. Eruptions in the years 1082 and 1649 devastated the surrounding country; the most recent, which lasted over a month, took place on December 16, 1707. The torrents of lava which ran down its slopes on various occasions must have been formidable, to judge by the two streams still visible between Yoshida and Funatsu, and above Matsuno in the direction of Fuji-Gawa.

Fuji has the generic form of a slightly truncated cone, as if its summit had received two formidable strokes with a hatchet. Its majestic slopes, which

on the west are interrupted by a slight elevation, rise to a height of nearly 4,000 metres above the sea-level. Their slanting lines are apparently unbroken by horizontal plateaux or terraces, by rocks or forests. Yet these exist, and serve to vary the uniformity of an ascent which would be tedious without them ; but from the plains below nothing distracts the eye of the spectator who sees the vast slopes of Fuji rising before him, from the dominant vision of this elementary form, so bare, so simple, which fills the horizon and compels the gaze—sole objective of all eyes, essential subject of all the conversations of men who meet it simultaneously in their field of vision.

This explains the surprising obsession of Japanese artists in this connection if we note further that its simple graphic form was a perpetual source of amusement to these lovers of impressions rendered with two strokes of the brush. For the later artists of *Oukiyoyé*, who finally discovered an inexhaustible source of picturesque motives in the landscapes of their country, it was the permanent background of a host of compositions. The foreground was the pretext for the diverse and varying spectacles of life, the eternally changing kaleidoscope of men and things : Fuji was the warp on which they embroidered life. To their eyes it was a symbol of the eternal and immutable. Around this elementary form they noted the varied play of the seasons, of light, and of the hours, and sometimes, in grandiose visions, the great painter *Hok'sai* saw nothing but the glorious Fuji in the splendour of sunset or the lightning glare of a



storm. They were the first to make it the centre of the pivot, of a series of notes, recording the most fugitive atmospheric phenomena: Hok'sai and Hiroshighé are the veritable ancestors of Claude Monet, and the three books containing the *Hundred Views of Fuji* are the most extraordinary achievement of an artist, who has rendered, simply by means of black-and-white, the subtle and changing portrait of light.

Fuji is visible over a very vast area; it may be plainly seen at Tokio through the perspective of certain streets, or from the top of certain hills; it is visible at Yokohama, and from afar it greets the traveller who arrives by sea. It is almost constantly before our eyes when, leaving Tokio, we take the old road of the Tokaido, traversed for days together by the travellers or the processions going from Kyoto, the old imperial town, to Yedo, the city of the Shôguns. The scenery of the Tokaido and the views of Fuji have been immortalised, more particularly in the admirable album of *Thirty-six Views of Fuji* by Hok'sai, and in the series of *Fifty-three Views of the Tokaido* by Hiroshighé. But Fuji often withdraws itself from view behind a thick screen of clouds; it is a rare piece of good luck to enjoy a clear view of it for several days at a time, and happy are they who have travelled round it without a disappointment.

For it is this which is a notable experience far more remarkable than the ascent of the mountain; no one can really claim to know Fuji who has not made the circuit. It is a necessary pilgrimage, and there is no devotee of Japanese



FUJI



DESCENT TO LAKE HAKONE.



who is not haunted by the idea of accomplishing it, so clearly does it evoke at every step the memory of the beautiful prints of which Fuji is the principal motive.

The most satisfactory way of making the circuit is to start from Kozu, to pass along one of the first stages of the Tokaido for some hours, from Kozu to Yumoto, recognising at every step the scenes that Hiroshighé animated with his humour in his prints, the fine road, which undulates across the plain between the double row of great wind-swept pines with the sudden fantastic play of their branches ; the roadside inns, with the little platform of plaited straw serving at once for table and bench, where a woman offers the passer-by a half cup of pale tea ; the rice-fields, where the work-girls toil ankle-deep in mud, their heads bound in a handkerchief or protected from the sun by enormous mushroom-shaped straw hats ; the hawkers, with their closely fitting canvas gaiters, walking gaily, carrying their load at the two extremities of a long bamboo pole, which oscillates like the beam of a pair of scales, laid transversely across the shoulders, and the little long-haired horses with evil eyes, bearing pack-saddles like mules. One crosses the wide beds of sluggish rivers in the middle of long tongues of sand, by great bridges on struts, between the feet of which the waters flow more swiftly, and which have not varied in shape for centuries. Then one reaches a mountainous region, the rugged gorges of which are filled with a luxuriant vegetation of green trees ; the noisy, foaming waters of a torrent boil



among them. We reach Myanoshita, where the European colony of Yokohama has made its mountain refuge from the intolerable summer heat of the coast towns. Even from Myanoshita the view of Fuji is striking; but how much more surprising is the sudden vision that bursts upon one a few hundred feet higher in the wide gap of the ridge which enables one to descend from Aschinoyou to the lake of Hakone. This beautiful lake appears suddenly at one's feet, with its calm, pure waters, and its delicious promontories covered with dense woods. High mountains close the horizon, and the clouds cast great shadows upon this richly coloured background. A delicious village nestles at the foot of the descent, its little houses pressed one against another. From above we see only the beautiful thatched roofs, silky as carpets of brown velvet, shrouded in the smoke of evening fires, and giving the very effect desired by Hok'sai when he painted it against the background of the lake and of Fuji, intersected by long horizontal strata of mist. And here it is itself, the glorious Fuji, thrusting itself into the great angle formed by the two mountains, the slopes of which, as they cross each other, close the horizon of the lake. To this inverted angle it opposes the proud cone of its long escarpments, and in clear weather the sun, setting behind it, casts its sharply defined reflection into the waters.

Hitherto it has been episodic merely, one of the grandiose details of the magnificent scenery. It is as we approach it, reaching Gotemba, that we really understand its sovereign majesty, and



are conscious of the emotional obsession which it is afterwards impossible to cast off. It is still night, and the first faint rays of dawn are hardly visible yet in the sky ; but in this Japan, where the passage from night to day is so brief, the sun climbs swiftly from the horizon. The country is absolutely deserted, and a wretched road winds deviously along the sides of the volcano, dusty with scoria : a meagre vegetation of scorched grass and stunted bushes barely suffices to hold the soil together. There it is before your eyes ! Gradually its shape takes a definite outline ; the enormous white mass that looks at first like a huge cloud floating plume-like on its crest resolves itself into the snow-cap, which every frosty autumn night increases, making a gleaming hood of long white strips. It is extremely cold when the sun suddenly strikes the white summit of the mountain with its rosy rays, and swiftly, as if breathed forth imperiously from its side, a tiny transparent cloud rises, unfurls itself, mounts, and fades into the azure. In the course of the day others will rise in the same manner ; condensing, they will prowl round like long serpents, and finally crown the cone till evening.

Fuji stands alone ; the plains separate it by vast distances from the mountain chains that surround it and from the little woods that obscure the view of it for the moment when we walk through them. At Kami-Yoshida a great bronze torii is planted in the very middle of the main street of the village, and if we turn, Fuji appears enframed in its trapeze. From this side, and

as far as Funatsu, the summit, which is more exposed to the midday heat, is clear of snow, and the slope on the right, with the slight elevation that interrupts its line, forms a ledge which emphasises its formidable structure. The plains dip gently to a depression, where presently we distinguish the gleaming waters of a lake. After this we pass from one enchantment to another; four lakes lie like scattered pearls at the foot of the mountain, separated one from another by narrow necks of land which have to be traversed on foot. We cross their waters in boats; delightful fishing villages enliven the banks, but more often they are solitary; and in the last two, giant forests come down to die on their banks—virgin forests, in which gigantic tree-trunks rot, and fall to pieces where they lie. And beyond these lakes, beyond the forests, in the vast spaces where no trace of human life is to be seen, Fuji continues to rear its elementary form heavenwards in all its startling simplicity.

We follow the banks of the fourth lake to a certain height, and the winding of the path causes us to lose sight of it. How many times we have turned to gaze at its now familiar form on the road which descends towards deep valleys still far distant! We wander in the solitudes, like a navigator vainly seeking the beacon-light from which he has asked guidance so long. And we descend swiftly towards a deep valley, where flows a vast and restless river that bears its name, the Fuji-Kawa, as if everything in this region had taken its imprint in some fashion.

We embark in a strange skiff, extremely long, made of four immense planks rudely fitted together ; two for the sides, curving at the ends and meeting fore and aft ; two for the bottom, interrupted by long parallel poles. A few heaps of logs, which might be mistaken for cargo, are loaded on it here and there. A very perilous navigation begins, the dangers of which are concealed by the extraordinary skill of the boatmen. They are three in number ; the first steers in the stern, the second propels the boat with an oar behind, and the third, armed with a huge bamboo pole, leans over the bows, and, with a supple, vigorous stroke, changes the course of the vessel from time to time. She threads her way between currents which meet or part in tumultuous waves, and banks almost on a level with the surface of the stream, eddies, the terrible rapids of which seem to be carrying you to perdition against a wall of rock, where the waters part and suddenly change their course ; over cataracts where an inclination of one metre in fifty sweeps you along in a frenzied gallop. The swirl of the boiling waters lifts the bottom of the boat, which rises as if gasping for breath, and we understand the necessity of these light and supple planks, which the water would crack if the heaps of logs did not maintain the necessary cohesion.

This goes on for hours, but there is nothing to which one so soon becomes accustomed as danger. Gradually the smooth surfaces of water become wider ; the valley expands, and the neighbourhood of the sea proclaims itself in the fresh breezes that come from the open. We quit the

river, to enter narrow canals, where the innumerable trading vessels that navigate these waters are moored. And as we round a hillside, Fuji reappears, a solitary giant, rising in the distance now, above the plains of Suruga, above the chains of mountains, rearing aloft the solemn, simple, and sublime form, which remains engraved on the memory as one of the most haunting silhouettes in Nature.



## CHAPTER VI

### *THE MONASTERY OF KOYA-SAN*

Its situation among the mountains of Yamato—Its foundation by the great saint Kobo-Daishi—A city of monks—How to get to the Koya mountain—The ascent through the sacred grove—Life in the monastery—The temples—Their art treasures—The cemetery of Koya-San.

IN the heart of the mountains of Yamato, the province which was the cradle of Japanese nationality, their Ile-de-France, on one of the chains which command the plains of the province of Kishu, the monasteries which constituted the Kongobuji still rise, though now much scattered. A lofty plateau, surrounded by the last wooded scarps, forms the Koya-San. This is one of the most ancient religious foundations of Japan, and one which has perhaps had no rival in the world as a city of monks.

The renowned saint Kobo-Daishi founded the first monastery here in 816, after the Emperor Saga had made him a present of the mountain. His life is the most marvellous and miraculous ever lived by a saint; and legend has so embellished and enriched it that no human invention could have sufficed for its construction. Becoming a priest in 793, he had been sent to China in 804 to



study; he there became the disciple of the famous abbot Huikwo, who commissioned him to take back to Japan, in 806, the rules of the Shingon sect, with all the ritual of its mystic formulæ and its incantations; he took with him likewise an enormous number of Buddhist books and ceremonial objects. In 810 he became abbot of the temple of Toji at Kyoto, and six years later he quitted it for the Koya, where he founded the largest monastery of Japan, and ended a life of exemplary sanctity. But there are many who refuse to believe in his death, and who are persuaded that he is awaiting, in a lethargic repose, the coming of Miroku, the Messiah of Buddha.

This city of monks must have been vast indeed, if it is true that in the Middle Ages it contained 90,000. Its greatest foe has been fire, which devastated it twice in the past century, in 1843 and 1888. The political spirit of Japan in the present day would no longer tolerate such monastic aggregations. About a hundred temples still exist, more or less well preserved. They are crowded together on a vast plateau set between two rocky, pine-crowned crests, and gigantic trees, pines, thuyas, and cryptomerias form sacred avenues of the sublimest effect. A little village of one long street subsists entirely on the pilgrimages, for there is no spot in which a sojourn is more necessary to the salvation of a believing Japanese.

There are two ways of approaching the Koya mountain. One is very rapid, for leaving Kyoto at daybreak, it is possible to arrive at Koya-San in the evening; the other is much slower, and

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this it is preferable to take for the descent, thus traversing the marvellous mountain region, through forests, valleys, defiles, and torrents, which ends at Yoshimo, and is no less picturesque than the most beautiful districts of the Cevennes or of the Tyrol.

Leaving the railway at Koyaguchi, the traveller has to endure two somewhat tedious hours in a small carriage which, passing through the rice-fields and the first spurs of the mountain, brings him to the ascent of the Koya. The rest of the route is enchanting. It leads first through a forest, the winding path of which rises gradually upon the wooded slopes of the sacred mountain. It crosses water-courses, which make their way through a luxuriant vegetation of tall grasses, lustrous green shrubs, and bamboos. Through the lofty thickets of cryptomeria and *hinochi*, the smooth or rugged shafts of which shoot upwards to a formidable height in search of the free air, the eye plunges to the depths of forest valleys, where the constant moisture produces a tropical luxuriance of vegetation; and this ascent by successive stages, where the monstrous roots of the trees simulate steps, has a something sacred and deeply religious in the solemn silence, and the subdued light that has filtered through so many leaves; it is a progress which seems to lack nothing but a Parsifalian music.

At last the ascent becomes less rugged, the spaces more luminous; a little chapel invites the first prayers of the pilgrims, a bridge indicates the first stage of their purification, and the first

buildings appear in scattered array. No preliminary plan seems to have governed the successive developments of the city ; the only rule is that of free fancy and caprice. There is no inn at Koya-San, and the traveller is the guest of the monks ; in one of the temples he accepts a hospitality, the simplicity of which does not preclude the most perfect cleanliness. We are in Japan ; the lodgings of the monks themselves are exemplary in this respect ; here, as everywhere, a great tub of boiling water is ready to alleviate the fatigue of the journey. You will have, however, to submit to a régime which excludes all nourishment that has once had life ; meat, fish, eggs, and milk are alike forbidden. The diet is exclusively vegetarian ; rice is the staple, and this is agreeably diversified by young bamboo shoots, lily-bulbs, and the young leaves of the chrysanthemum.

A man comes and puts himself gracefully at your disposition for the inspection of the temples ; and it will be well if he first advises the abbots of the visit, as this will spare you interminable parleys. You set out through the beautiful park, intersected by roads and paths, bordered by walls or hedges ; on every side the temples appear sleeping in the ancient peace of great trees, within their enclosing courtyards, which are strewn with sand and carefully raked every morning—their charming gardens of rocks, and clipped trees, and ponds full of mysterious meanings.

The Kongo-Ji is the principal temple ; it is surrounded by a large grove of ancient cryptomerias,



and two great gates guard the entrance to the immense court. The temple itself, which is entered under a immense pent-house roof, lighted by lateral panels, pierced and carved in a very remarkable manner by artists of Jingoro's workshop, has, right and left, two buildings very much earlier in date, preceded by long porticoes and surmounted by fine roofs. It happens to be the anniversary of the founder of the temple, and the priests are holding a memorial service. They have just appeared in the strong sunlight of the great courtyard in their splendid vestments of brocaded silk; they descend the steps slowly in two parallel lines. They are preceded by two children, whose long robes of embroidered muslin are completed by a narrow silk scarf that trails on the ground behind them. On their heads they wear crowns of gilded copper with pendants; their faces are painted, their lips reddened with carmine, their eyes darkened with kohl. Mats laid end to end along the courtyard indicate the course of the evolutions they are to perform. The procession advances thus at a slow pace; muffled responses echo the prayer of the abbot, who, mitred and wrapped in a mantle embroidered with floss silk, advances behind a dais with hanging fringes, which a priest carries on a long stick. By little steps, interrupted by brief halts, the procession completes its evolutions and returns to the principal entrance.

The Mieidô, with its two superposed roofs, its superb exterior gallery, and its fine entrance supported by four thick columns of rare wood, impresses by its air of majesty. Its treasure is one

of the richest in relics of all the Koya-San. Tradition attributes them to Kobo-Daishi, and they are piously preserved in a *kura* with earthen walls of considerable thickness. They are: a little terra cotta figure of Buddha, said to have been modelled by the saint at the age of seven, and certainly not of later date than the Tempio era (729-748).—A very curious brown lacquer box, the lid decorated with a lion drawn in gold in outline, with a great deal of character. It contains the plaited straw slippers of Kobo-Daishi, given him by the Emperor Saga-Tenno.—A tarred calabash, made of three or four sheets of thick paper, beaten and compressed, and covered with a layer of exfoliated lacquer decorated with golden butterflies. This remarkable piece of lacquer of the Tempio period still contains the chaplet given to the saint by the Emperor of China.—A little lacquered shrine with a pagoda roof, the sides decorated with vases of flowers, and the two doors with Nio-o, the guardians of temples, in gold on a brown ground, an admirable piece perhaps anterior to the Fujiwara.—A long lacquer box containing ancient plates for printing, very delicately engraved; they were perhaps, used for printing with gold.—A fine kakemono of Cho-Shikio seated on the green lotus, in a splendid red robe, meditating, with bare breast and hands held down, the thumbs touching, comparable in beauty to the magnificent Amida by the same great Chinese master, standing, his hand uplifted in supplication, in a deep red robe patterned with gold disks, preserved in the temple of Djo-Fukuin.



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—Two ancient screens of the school of Tosa, have an epic grandeur with the two cavaliers in armour, their saddles resting on red saddle cloths, the background formed by the green branches of pine-trees on a gold ground.—A little lacquered reliquary of the Kamakura epoch (thirteenth century), has eight shutters, each delicately painted with a saint accompanied by his patron.

The Hô-Koin was one of the first monasteries constructed by Kobo-Daishi at Koya-San, and its collection of antique paintings is one of the richest extant. It contains at least three admirable Chinese works, one of which, attributed to Godoshi, the great Chinese painter of the ninth century, was part of a series which the monks have proved unable to guard against the covetousness of collectors. It is a Rakkan, on a great seat, the back of which is draped with a splendid stuff; his open mouth is full of life; with his hand he tells the beads of a rosary; a person behind him, dressed in a gorgeous robe, holds a vase in his hand. It is a piece of marvellous colour in wonderful preservation.—A Kwannon, seated on a rock, at the foot of a cascade, is lost in thought. The supple execution, in simple black lines, is very characteristic of the learned art of Mokkei (twelfth century), who influenced the Japanese artists so deeply.—A Nawa-Monju, whose brown body is swathed with cords painted in white body-colour, is a striking figure modelled with great mastery; his thick black hair hangs loose, and he holds in his hands a blue book.

Two fine screens, on which two cock

strutting amidst flowers and blossoming tree stems, show by their careful execution, neither very free nor very light, with what decorative skill a painter like Tchokouan could arrange a vast composition of such simple elements.

At the Jimmiô-in, a cock crowing before a banana-tree, whilst another cock and a hen in a little enclosure are watched by a cat, which sits purring on a rock overhung by peonies with bronze-green foliage, is a good example of the decorative richness with which Ogori Sôtan was able to invest two panels of grey paper. An admirable Chinese painting represents Sakia-Muni, seated on the lotus, in his splendid red robe with gold motives, adored by two standing saints.

The Kammada-Kanno has two halls decorated by Tsunenobou with large pine-branches, their broad and vigorous black lines displayed against the gold ground of the *fusumas*, and two splendid screens by Motonobou, representing the Seven Sages of the Bamboos, painted in the rich blacks and velvety greys characteristic of his assured and supple brush. The Kongô-Sommai is the only Koyan temple that has never suffered from fire, which makes it doubly precious. It contains two halls marvelously decorated in the style of Naonobou, with large trees, flowers, and birds, on a gold background, and white swans among brown reeds, the fine design and rich colour of which would not be unworthy of Sôtan. The room set apart for prayer and the performance of religious rites has preserved intact the series of eight saints (Kobo-Daishi and his Chinese companions), a traditional

subject in Japan at successive epochs; pasted to the wall, behind or at the sides of the altar, it made a special kind of decoration. But the unique treasure of the temple is a lacquered gong-stand, the uprights of which are decorated in gold with little hillocks dotted with sparse trees, amidst which gallop horsemen shooting with bows and arrows, or hurling javelins at birds. The splendid design and admirable archaic character of the composition is beyond all praise. This is perhaps one of the most ancient of the Chinese lacquers Japan has preserved for us, and its value is inestimable. Another relic of great interest is the Taotô, a little pagoda of red wood dating from the Kamakura era, with its charming ceiling, and its altar surrounded by four great columns, which, as in the famous monastery of Chu-Sonji, are adorned with painted medallions of seated figures with delicate little faces (those at Chu-Sonji are in mother-of-pearl); the holes left by the nails which supported their metal framework are still visible. Masacco, the mother of Sanetommoco, is said to have had this pagoda built.

The devotees of Japanese art will be more especially attracted by the temple of Eko-in. Here there is a very notable *kakemono*, remarkable for its strangeness and its savage quality. It represents Kujaku-Miô seated on a peacock with an enormous cock's head, and lower down Dô-Ji mounted on the *kirin* or fiery horse, the head and chest of which are in flames. But the sublimest work here preserved is the great painting of the priest Es shin, one of the crowning achievements of Japanese art, and also one of



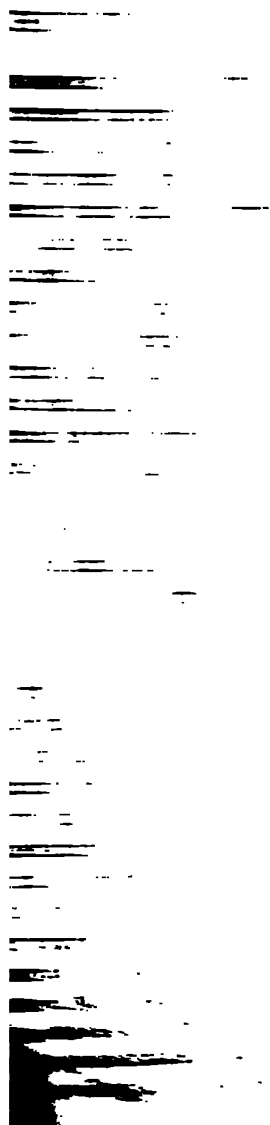


BUDDHA AND THE THIRTY-THREE BOSATSU, KAKEMONO  
PAINTED BY THE PRIEST ESSHIN IN 1017, AT THE  
TEMPLE OF ERO-IN, IN THE KOYA-SAN.

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CEMETERY AT KOYA-SAN.





and the dense green shade of the great trees are awe-inspiring, and the peace and silence seem deeper than before. Could a more appropriate spot have been chosen for the ancient cemetery, where from time immemorial a nation has come to worship its dead? Not that these are necessarily buried here. Very often the tombs are merely monuments raised to their memory, or, perhaps, after cremation some relic of the defunct, a bone or a tooth, has been deposited in the general monument known as Kinsu-Sō; in all cases their funerals, unless sent to one of the monasteries, where they will enjoy the privilege of daily prayers, and where, by Kobo-Daishi's help, they will be enabled to live again in the land of ideal purity. And it is in this wild forest, amidst ravines and rocks under the lofty vault of huge cryptomerias, in the moist atmosphere of decomposition perpetually creating new life, that tombs and mausoleums are everywhere. They are of every kind, monumental and modest, bearing both great and humble names. Obelisks commemorating the Daimios of the provinces of Senai, Kaga, Satsuma, Hizen, and Chikushi; tombs presented by emperors to the memory of great chiefs or warriors, and the innumerable rough stones of the poor and obscure. After walking for a long time through this vast city of the dead, we finally arrive at the Mandoro, the temple of Kobo-Daishi, near which is that object of extreme veneration, the tomb of Kobo-Daishi, whose worship is stimulated by perpetual pilgrimages.

Night has fallen swiftly, and in the pure calm air, to leave the oppressive shade of the forest,

a large bell calls the faithful to evening prayer. In the temple all seems to sleep, save that from time to time the repeated strokes of a smaller bell are audible. The evening service is going on in a low room, where the eyes gradually become accustomed to the semi-darkness. The abbot is seated on a stool, which his wide chasuble conceals entirely, before a very low altar, loaded with perfume-burners and bronzes, and illuminated by four tapers in massive candlesticks. On either side the monks are seated on their heels, clad in splendid chasubles made of innumerable pieces of silk of different patterns, sewn together in squares; their sabots of red lacquered wood, with curved points, are placed before them. In the penumbra lacquers gleam, the red and gold of sacerdotal stuffs flash out, and long wide strips of silk, edged with fringe, hang from the ceiling. The priest sings a low, weary, uniform chant, in a quavering voice, with abrupt cadences, and the responses take up the strain through half closed lips, with guttural breaks and repetitions in a swifter rhythm, with a monotony that lulls and hypnotises like the ecstatic gyrations of a dancing dervish. At intervals the clear voice of a child shakes out a shower of notes, and the priests put on their shoes, which clack with every step on the inlaid floor, and march in single file round the altar. From time to time the officiating priest puts fresh incense into the burners, and strikes to the right of him on a silver gong, while a cymbal resounds with long vibrations. Outside the night is fresh and clear, the sky poured with stars, and an owl hoots mournfully in a

far into the coast in long, sinuous gulfs, protected from the gales of the Pacific by hundreds of islands and islets scattered over the sea—a belt of high breakwaters against which the fury of the waves exhausts itself. There are no fewer than ninety-eight islands between Shiozama and Kinkazan; the latter, one of the farthest out into the Pacific, is a sacred isle, a place of pilgrimage where the priests in their temples and the tame deer under the pine-trees live in peace and amity. All these little isles rise sheer from the waters; the sea bristles with them, and from the shores to the horizon there is a vast array of fantastic shapes, harsh, abrupt, and irregular; rocks of volcanic tufa worn by the waves or the rain have taken the strangest forms of threatening needles, savage tusks, or natural arches, through which the water appears blue or green in the distance, with the improvised effect of a sail passing as in the narrow circumference of a kaleidoscope. Everywhere, even in the crevices of rocks where there is a total absence of soil, pine-trees are clinging in the most paradoxical positions, convulsed as maniacs, thrusting out their branches as best they can, some of them almost upside down, so low do they bend over the waters, exchanging tragic confidences with the sea, true conquering warriors on territory that resists them and is submerged by their assault. If this landscape were not Japanese, it would have to become so, so perfectly does it harmonise with the taste of the Japanese people, whom we may sometimes surprise laughing in the face of Nature.

The traveller must embark to penetrate the

intimate character of this rocky sea, where  
 scale of the air brings the unexpected to  
 the point of view changes every moment,  
 also the colours of the waters, modified by  
 the wind or by the currents. During the au-  
 tumn, storms are often severe; the sun sit-  
 ting under the semicircle of a rainbow  
 possible proves fallacious. The water is dar-  
 k with blood-red reflections; the austere green  
 pine-trees is veiled in a darkness with which  
 sky is already draped as in a shroud; the  
 rocks suddenly turn pink at the water's edge  
 as many little huge flocks of anxious bird  
 gather on the islands, uttering wild cries.  
 At night the night falls in these lands with  
 twilight. From the boats that one passes  
 darkness almost without seeing them, com-  
 ing all at the bowman, soft and low. Slow, re-  
 verent, infinitely mysterious, mingle with the  
 of guiding ones.

*San-ko-shikidai* is situated on the S.  
 Japan, in the province of Tongô, to the north  
 of Kyoto. Here we have a curious contras-  
 t. A vast, deep gulf is enclosed by  
 mountains covered with forests, and at the  
 end of the little town of Mifuné shelters a th-  
 commercial port. A long narrow strip of  
 ground extends for two nautical miles, c-  
 the gulf longitudinally and dividing it, wi-  
 communication with a narrow inlet, from a tr-  
 bay, a small pond with peaceful waters, contr-  
 sharply with the furious breakers which  
 on the shore on the other side, no more than t





THE PENINSULA OF AMA-NO-HASHIDATE.



metres off. From the shore where Miyazu nestles a ferry conveys the *djiurikisha* to the extremity of the long peninsula of Ama-no-Hashidate, and for some kilometres one rolls along on a capricious road, between two vast sheets of water, under magnificent pine-trees. They stretch their great branches over a shore gay with little rose-coloured pinks; bushes of camellia spread their blossoms under the shade, among the dry grasses. How delicious is the sensation of rolling thus, without noise or jar, in the freshness of a November morning, one of those 'grey-eyed morns' described by Shakespeare, which drowns all contours in its mists, and turns realities into the shadows of dreams.

But Ama-no-Hashidate only reveals the full beauty of its site when we look at it from above, from one of the slopes that command it above the little village of Ejiri. Thence we can distinctly see the division of the two bays by the long yellow peninsula, almost level with the water, covered with its dark mantle of green pines.

The little steam coasting-boat pants and hurries in the midst of the surrounding calm. Sheltered fishing villages dot the shores of the creeks; the houses press one against another, the crests of their roofs showing large slabs of straw; deep cavities of shadow are nothing but the moorings of boats upon the sea. Here and there immense bamboo poles support nets, and long palisades are but trusses of rice-straw set to dry. In the creeks great junks ride at anchor, flank

to flank, and at once evoke certain immortal prints by Hiroshigé. Their fretwork bulwarks rise waist-high, and the roofs of the inner chambers emerge from the bridges. In the evening they are to be seen navigating in company, two and two, their bows lashed together, to enable their crews to talk; the breeze fills the great quadrangular sails of fine matting, and the fishermen in skirts of rice-straw and blue cotton jackets, haul up the nets, singing as they work, while the man at the helm beats time and imparts a rhythm to their efforts with a little hammer on the gunwale.

Of the three *San-kei*, Miyajima is unquestionably the most famous and popular, and also the most accessible to the inhabitants of Kyoto, Osaka, and Kōbē. It is reached from Kōbē by a slow voyage of a night and a day upon the Inland Sea, between its coast and the islands scattered on its surface. Landing-stages are very numerous; but in none of these villages do we note the colour, the movement, the gaiety, and the tumult which are the accompaniments of every embarkation on the Nile or in the ports of the Levant. Here the colours both of land and vesture are neutral, the gestures of the people gentle, measured, silent, and docile. In lowering weather, and under a grey sky, it is an eastern Brittany; the high mountains with their subdued colouring succeed one another in sandy undulations or slopes covered with a scanty vegetation. These mountains, the planes of which rise in harmonious tiers, lack sublimity of form. In this calm landscape, on the

shores of this subdued sea, the great workshops of the naval dockyard of Kuré have an anomalous air, with their immense cranes, their elevators, their iron-plated keels, the perpetual noise of their heavy hammers, the thick smoke which obscures the sky. Nothing suggests that behind the screen of islands, beyond the cape and the rocks, stretches the vast sea, the huge Pacific, extending with no intermediate land to the coast of America. There is a point in the journey when the coasts approach each other so closely that the channel resembles a wide lock, of which the vessel occupies almost the entire width, bordered on either side by a long quay covered with houses. Finally, at the close of day, Miyajima, the holy isle, appears, a truly exquisite spot. It is a high mountain covered by a dense pine forest, preceded by a great red torii, like a sacred sentinel, bathed by the waves at high tide. At the end of the creek, the entrance of which it commands, stand the brilliant red buildings of the Shinto temple, built upon piles, and communicating one with another by open footbridges. At low tide a sickly marine smell rises from the surrounding mud, and this place of prayer recalls vaguely certain seaside casinos of our northern coasts. But on moonlight nights when the tide is high, all these buildings on piles seem to be floating like a dream upon the waters. The sacred avenue which leads to them from the village follows the coast-line. It is bordered by monumental stone lanterns, and twisted pines extend convulsive arms above, while tame deer stray among them at will.



Nijūjima is one of the most frequented spots of Japan at the two seasons which bring round those delightful Nature festivals which all true Japanese make a point of attending: the blossoming of the cherry-trees in spring, and the reddening of the maples in autumn. There are indeed few places in Japan where a more fairy-like spectacle awaits the traveller. A little valley behind the temple, to the bottom of which a stream descends in cascades from the mountain, is overgrown with an extraordinary wealth of trees of every kind, great cryptomerias, forest pines, cherries, and maples.

It is towards the middle of November that these latter are in their most flamboyant splendour, making the little valley an unimaginable blaze of colour, which, if rendered by a painter, would be ridiculed as absurdly unreal. The strongest reds, in all the variations of the scale, through purple, vermillion, and violet, and the purest yellows, make up a harmony which rings out in clear and brilliant tones, in broken chords of extraordinary sonority. The dark green of the pines makes a continuous bass, a background for all this luminous brilliance.

*Lake Biwa*.—Every step in this delightful expedition evokes a train of artistic reminiscences. There is not one among its famous landscapes which has not inspired the painters of the *Oukiyoé*; and there is little doubt that many earlier artists, influenced by the Chinese masters, artists like *Sōami*, susceptible to beauty and anxious to steep themselves in the nature among which they lived, came to ask of them the gentle confidences that



TORII SUBMERGED BY THE RISING TIDE  
BEFORE THE TEMPLE OF MIYAJIMA.



ISLETS AT MATSUSHIMA.





touch our hearts. But it is above all Hiroshighé who accompanies the traveller throughout this divine landscape ; he is the most sincere and the most deeply moved among those who have transcribed it, the most ingenuous soul in whom the aspects of Japanese life and landscape have been reflected. But he is at the same time the most amazing modifier and adapter of its aspects, and herein lies the greatness of his genius. One must visit Lake Biwa in order to surprise the secrets of an art which can draw such grandiose effects and compositions of such suggestive simplification from some picturesque or curious motive in nature.

The lake of Biwa or Omi, which is separated from the valley of Kyoto by the fine mountain of Hieizan, is of remarkable extent, and cannot be much smaller than the Lake of Geneva. A broad band of cultivated land divides it from the slopes of Hieizan, while on the opposite shore, on the east, a chain of little sandy mountains rises towards the centre to a peak of a volcanic character known as the Fuji of Omi. The beautiful views of Lake Biwa have been the theme of Japanese poets and painters in all ages. The "eight beauties of Omi" occupy a place in Japanese art analogous to that of "the eight beauties of Siaô-Siang" in Chinese art. These eight spots were places of pilgrimage ; no cultivated Japanese would have been content to die without having seen them once in his life. The subjects so often painted or sung were : The autumn moon seen from Ishiyama ; the snow at evening at Hirayama ; sunset at Seta ; the evening bell at the temple of Miidera ; t

been given to its branches, abrupt returns and strange angles. Checked in one direction, it has developed all the more vigorously in another. It has become an unimaginable thing, not indeed beautiful, for it is incoherent and shapeless, but gigantic. Its colossal limbs are supported by crutches, and one gazes with stupefaction at this formidable millenarian, who refuses to die; yet this would indeed have been a fine revenge to have taken upon its gardeners!

Returning, we pass through Otsu again, and then through Zeze. Along the pleasant shores of the lake we follow the wonderful avenue of bent and twisted pines, through which we catch distant glimpses of the blue waters, beyond the tender green of rice-fields. The road then leads along the banks of the river Seta, overlooked by picturesque hills, where the maples have already put on their copper tints, and brings us to Ishyama-dera, and its delightful restaurants built on piles in the river. On the hill behind, the temple of Ishyama rises in tiers among the ravines. It replaced the famous monastery founded under the Emperor Shōmu in the middle of the eighth century. After successive fires, Hideyoshi caused the buildings to be set among the natural rocks, at the end of the sixteenth century, and these, dotted about its terraces, give it a very individual appearance. On one of the upper terraces, under the shade of great trees, is a little kiosk, built on the very edge of the precipice, whence, says tradition, a very poetic view of the autumn moon rising over Lake Biwa is to be obtained.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THEATRES—ENTERTAINMENTS

The Nô drama—Its origin and tradition—The stage—Generic characteristics of the drama—The dramas of *Semimaru* and the *Wind in the Pine-Trees*—The Chiogen—The popular theatre—Its big effects—Its national character—Wrestling matches with flat hands—Dancing—The organisation of the Geishas—Dancing in the tea-houses and on the stage.

#### NÔ DRAMAS

THE Nô drama<sup>1</sup> is one of the last survivals of the spectacles Japan has preserved for us from ancient times. It dates from the end of the Kamakura period in the fourteenth century, and no modification of its ancient traditions has been introduced. The schools have transmitted them piously, together with the marvellous accessories without which their beauty would be incomplete: the splendid silken robes of brocade or cloth of gold, decorated with landscapes, flowers, and birds, and the lacquered masks, the calm or suffering, gentle or terrible expressions of which are alike tragic, and give an impersonal and eternal character to the art of the actors which is strangely impressive. The dancing-schools of Nô are great

<sup>1</sup> In Japan the Nô is the lyric drama.



art schools, upheld by prolonged and strenuous studies, to which generations of actors have been devoting themselves for centuries. There are some who appear only at very long intervals before the public, being engaged almost constantly by the Court. Others are occupied in the elaborate preparation of monthly performances, to which only subscribers are admitted, and students, who follow them attentively, much as our students at a course of applied art might do. Conspicuous among these is M. Mumevaka, an admirable actor, and one of the latest composers of a Nô drama is due to the repertory of two hundred and thirty-five pieces requested by the last six centuries. These dramas are written in a poetic style so difficult to understand as our mystery plays of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries would be to us. The spectators, therefore, follow them only in dumb, with the greatest attention. They constitute a serious and enthusiastic audience, a veritable elite, attracted by no vain desire to be not themselves, but by a sincere passion for art and poetry.

A large square wooden platform is cut off from the audience by a narrow passage on three sides. The audience is divided into boxes for four persons who sit on mats; behind these runs a wide gallery. The back of the platform is set against the end wall, which is of light wood, invariably decorated with an enormous green pine with various branches. It is connected on the right with a passage on the same level, giving access to a room where the actors prepare them-





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selves, and by which they make their entrances and exits. As in Shakespeare's plays, however, there is absolutely no scenery: changes of place are indicated by some simple accessories, as a wicker-work hut, a pine, or two large clumps of peonies.

Seated to the right, in two rows, and in profile to the public, are eight persons, whose sashes have coats-of-arms woven in white on the reverse and the sleeves. This is the chorus, which, motionless throughout, takes part in the action by means of slow chants, the rhythm and cadences of which frequently recall those of our Catholic churches.

Facing the public, with their backs to the end wall, from which they are some three metres distant, are the musicians, a flute and two tambourines. They accompany the declamation almost continuously, unless a sort of recitative requires their silence. The flute is an ear-piercing instrument. The tambourines, in the shape of little barrels with skins stretched at either end, are held upon a level with the right knee, the mallets are on the knee without resting upon it, and are struck by the left hand with a hard tap. The slow movement of the fingers produces a tremulous sound.

This instrumental accompaniment is combined with a vocal accompaniment which the two tambourine players lead with plaintive cries. It

continues almost without intermission during the performance, and is kept up on the highest register of the voice, in a monotone, interrupted by



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This instrumental accompaniment is interwoven with a vocal accompaniment, which the two tambourine players lead with plaintive cries. It continues almost without intermission during the performance, and is kept up on the highest register of the voice, in a wailing shriek interrupted by



hoarse hiccoughs. It gives the whole action a tinge of lugubrious melancholy, save at the moments when it finds some more lively rhythms to mark the more rapid measure of some special dance, such as the Dance of the Lions.

Against this musical background of chorus and instruments a rapid action is developed, without any apparent divisions, in which the poetic, the dramatic, and the musical sentiment are mingled in unequal proportions, according to the nature of the drama. As a rule there are not more than three characters, who are supplemented by supernumeraries when the action is martial.

The dramatic element predominates in the admirable piece, *Semimarou*, the blind prince, the kinsman of those numerous Japanese princes who, at certain hours of their lives, weary of power, sought oblivion in the silence of the monastery. But in his case the retirement is involuntary; he has been exiled on account of his blindness, which is considered a disgrace to the Imperial house. He advances slowly, clad in a robe of violet silk, stiff with embroideries of golden birds; two attendants hold over his head the wicker dais simulating the palanquin in which he is to ascend the mountain. A passer-by, whose ingenuous soul is penetrated with respectful pity, precedes him, wearing a very wide, short pair of breeches, stiffened by two pleats. He turns round frequently to the prince, making slow evolutions of little short steps, with his feet together, and slides along the boards on his heels, addressing guttural exhortations to the young man. Then

there is a moving dialogue between the two, seated face to face, and talking in deep, muffled voices. He drapes the prince in a dark green mantle, prostrates himself at his feet, and raises his hand slowly to his forehead with the ritual gesture expressive of grief and tears; the stiffness of this hieratic action suggests something eternal; it is like that of a statue, fixed for all time. He then conducts the prince to a wicker cabin in the corner of the stage, which symbolises the monastery in which he is to live, and goes slowly away.

The stage is empty. Alone in his cabin, the prince sits lost in unfathomable thought. The flute utters a piercing cry, the two tambourines reply by a dull sound, and one of the voices utters a howl so doleful that it can only be compared to a dog baying at the moon; lamentations follow thick and fast, then cease at a brief wailing note from the flute.

The prince takes up a *biwa*, and expresses his grief by a few mournful sounds. Then a new personage appears at the end of the long passage. The prince's sister has also been driven from the Court, and, simulating madness, has begged her bread on the highway. She wears a skirt of cherry-coloured silk, and a white over-dress, on which her long black hair falls in disorder. She carries a little green branch against her shoulder. The mask on her face is of the utmost delicacy and refinement. The sounds of the *biwa* have struck her ear; she cannot be mistaken; it is none other than the prince, her brother. She stops short before stepping on to the stage. The tambourine

players make two or three spasmodic movements. She speaks, and her voice is full of sorrow. She advances with hesitating steps, and her heels tap sharply on the boards with a sort of savage energy; her white silk bodice and dead-white mask harmonise delicately with the background of grey wood. Bending forward, and brandishing her branch, she advances more rapidly to the wicker cabin, stops again, hesitates, strikes the boards with her heel, turns, and executes a most extraordinary dancing march. The prince speaks; she stops; he knows that she is before him, and his softly modulated voice is full of a sadness so infinite and so remote that it seems to come from another world; he opens his fan, and his sister listens, motionless. She replies, and her soft voice takes on an infinity of modulations, as if the things she has to say were more varied, of more delicate degrees of tenderness. This dialogue without music has a poignant, incomparable grandeur.

He gropes his way out of his cabin, and some magnetism draws him towards her. Voices and instruments give an additional intensity to this touching encounter. They stand confronting each other, and their right hands, the thumbs turned inwards, rise to their foreheads without touching them, in the sublime and statuesque gesture that denotes grief. They sit down facing each other, while the chorus chants their despair in unison. But presently she rises, and her plaintive, tender words resemble a farewell. Her hand held before her forehead, her branch uplifted, she goes, but



turns half-way once more towards him. The prince too rises, and his voice trembles. Feeling with his stick, after the pitiful fashion of the blind, he advances, guided by the voice of his sister, who takes a few steps towards him. But this is the final farewell; she goes out, and he covers his sightless eyes. The flute utters a piercing, long-drawn note.

Some of the dramas are more purely poetic and musical, such as *The Wind in the Pine-Trees*, one of the earliest and finest in the Nô repertory, in which the simultaneous and alternate dances of the two sisters round the symbolic pine-tree are full of an indescribable grace and melancholy. This drama, founded on an ancient legend full of images destined to evoke a whole world of poetic souvenirs in the mind of the auditor, is very difficult to understand without a wide knowledge of ancient Japanese literature.

Briefly, it is the story of two beautiful sisters, fisher-maidens of Sûma, called "The Wind in the Pines," and "Autumn Rain." Returning one evening from their fishing, they find before their hut a pilgrim who craves their hospitality. He falls in love with the two sisters and takes them to wife; later on, he is suddenly summoned away; he leaves them, and never returns.

The drama then introduces a bonze, who, passing one day on the beach, notices commemorative strips floating from the pine-trees. The spirits of the two sisters presently appear to him. It is impossible to convey any idea of these strange and beautiful visions. They advance

lightly, dressed in exquisite raiment, and between them and the bonze there is a colloquy full of delicate and poetic images, which must have a strong evocative effect on the mind of a cultured Japanese, just as with us a *Leitmotiv* of Wagner's will often reawaken lost impressions. One of the sisters brings out a splendid garment, the only relic left them of the man they loved so dearly, and puts it on her sister, who then performs a dance so heart-rending in its expression of hopeless sorrow, that it is hard to refrain from tears.

Other dramas have comic interludes, like the *Adachi gu Hara*, the witch who wanders on the mountains. Two knights come upon her cabin, at the door of which she is spinning. She complains of the difficulty of making a living, and leaves them for a few minutes to see to their food, strictly forbidding them to enter her hut. Worn out with fatigue, the knights, seated at the door, fall asleep in her absence. Their servant, anxious to disobey the old woman's injunctions, waits till his masters are sleeping soundly. He tries all sorts of comic devices to see if they are really sleeping, makes a grotesque and noisy demonstration, pretends to go away. When he is well assured that they are asleep he opens the door of the hut. Oh, horror! it is full of human bones! Hereupon the old woman returns, transformed into a devil. She grins fiendishly, her forehead bristles with horns. She advances, retreats, stamps violently with her heel, and her foot twitches with horrible energy in its white sock. The knights try to exorcise her by rubbing a chaplet in their hands; but they





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recoil before her terrifying onslaught ; finally they succeed in putting her to flight.

There are other dances again, more purely musical and rhythmic, such as the *Dance of the Lions* round the clumps of peonies, which take on a character of ineffable savagery from the terrible masks, crowned with thick tawny and white manes.

Every Nô drama is followed by a *chiogen*, a sort of declamatory and pantomimic frenzy, without music, the gaiety of which is designed to soothe the overwrought nerves of the audience. For instance, one represents a man whose wife is always ill, and who laments his fate. He meets an individual who vaunts his talents, and whom he takes for a healer ; he is nothing but a charlatan, who plays a thousand tricks at his expense.

Will the Nô drama survive in that rapid movement the Japanese believe to be progress, which is carrying them on to an unknown destiny ? It would be deplorable if it should disappear. It is one of the finest forms of their poetic literature, deeply impregnated with Buddhism ; and no religion in the world has discovered so subtle a form of exhortation. Born in the monastery and the temple, where sculpture and painting also were exclusively practised in the early ages, and performed solely as a complement to religious rites, the Nô drama has always been addressed to a cultured audience ; it was far too literary for the masses.<sup>1</sup> This is one of the causes of its being

<sup>1</sup> The most recent and complete collection of Nô dramas is the *Yô-Kyôkou-Tsoukaï*, which contains 235 pieces, the majority dating from the fifteenth century. The authors

somewhat obscure to us. But it is always marvellously plastic; the gesture and the dancing are so clearly and supremely expressive that we miss none of the elementary sentiments expressed. The complete disregard of scenery and of the unities gives it a certain likeness to the fairy comedies of Shakespeare, and its dramatic vigour, the part played by the chorus, the masks, and the dancing, show an extraordinary affinity to the Greek drama.

Japan has so far kept both its art and its drama from Western criticism. In each domain the revelations that await the bold spirits who may embark on a study of the subject are incalculable. As regards the Nô dramas, this honour seems likely to fall to the portion of French criticism. The Abbé Péri, at present Professor of Japanese at the Hanoi Institute, has taken an absorbing interest in this branch of literature throughout a sojourn of eighteen years in Japan. It will not be long, presumably, before he gives us the penetrating study we expect from him.

#### THE POPULAR THEATRE

There is a great gulf between the Nô dramas, which are reserved for the *élite*, and the popular pieces affected by the masses. But the passionate interest aroused by both sufficiently shows that were probably Buddhist monks. M. Aston, in his *Littérature Japonaise* (A. Colin, Paris, 1902) gives a translation of one of the most famous, the *Takasago*.

The best critical study of the Nô that has appeared so far is Chamberlain's *Classical Poetry of the Japanese*.



the theatre is one of the favourite amusements of the Japanese.

The theatres, which at Tokio are scattered in the four quarters of the town, are gathered together in the same district at Kyoto; long floating banners in brilliant hues and many-coloured play-bills, on which the principal episodes of the drama are figured, serve to indicate them to the passer-by. The theatres are all very much alike—light structures of wood, doomed one day to become the prey of the flames. They consist of a slightly inclined pit, divided into little squares like a chess-board; in each square four persons can sit crouched on the floor. Two narrow platforms perpendicular to the stage provide a means of circulation. All around on the first floor runs a gallery divided into boxes of the same kind, opening on a corridor.

The auditorium presents a very animated appearance, for the spectators are nearly always in motion, save when the pathetic moments of the drama claim their attention. As the play begins at eight o'clock in the morning, or five in the evening, and ends at five o'clock in the evening, or at midnight, there is a very long interval, when a meal may be taken in the theatre itself. Women predominate among the spectators; some of them do not hesitate to bring the children they are suckling.

As in the *Nô* dramas, the players are all men, but in the popular plays the actors do not wear masks, and those who have the most refined features are chosen to take the female parts.



There is a chorus, but it is less prominent than in the Nô dramas ; more restricted in number, the members are relegated to a little box with a grating on the stage itself. A slight and very subdued accompaniment on the *biwa* forms a kind of musical basis to the drama.

A very ingenious arrangement causes a circular platform to revolve on a central axis, which serves as pivot ; only a semicircle of the circumference, cut off by the curtain, is visible to the spectator ; and while the action is going on, the other half of the platform is prepared for the next act. Accordingly, when one scene is finished the platform makes a half-turn, carrying with it actors and scenery, and presenting the second half ready for the new scene.

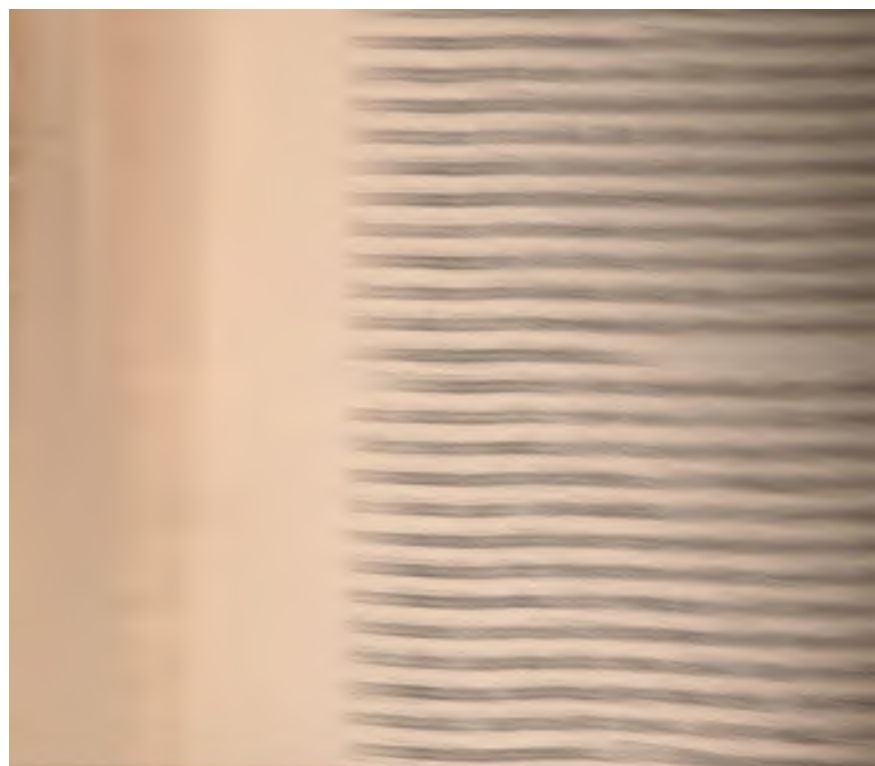
Comic pieces are played in these theatres, in which the buffooneries are often full of humour, and episodic dramas, founded for the most part on ancient legends, or reflecting some aspects of Japan in olden times. In these the actors wear very fine costumes, and the action takes place in admirable scenery, the landscapes for which are painted by artists who are very great in this genre.

As with us, the pathos of these plays is of a kind which appeals to the crowd, and paternal or filial affection, and the joys and sorrows of love, draw tears from the tender-hearted no less readily than such pieces as *Les deux Orphelines* with us. I recall one of these scenes in which a father returns to his house at the moment when his daughter is leaving it regretfully to join her lover. It is night ; she walks stealthily in the little garden

towards the gate, turning perpetually and taking a few steps back towards the home she is leaving with so much grief. The father, who adores her, watches her anxiously from the dark house which he has just entered ; but he utters no cry to recall her, for he knows that a duty more imperious than filial piety leads her to her unhappy lover, who is repulsed by all, and to whom she is about to bring the consolation of her love. When she totters back to the door, and leans for a moment against the post, he throws a purse at her feet as a parting benison. At this moment the most poignant emotion overcame the audience, and, remembering the strength of the family idea in Japan, and the inflexible nature of paternal authority, one realised all the dramatic quality of a conflict in which it yields to the sacred law of love.

One curious feature is the energy with which the theatre still reflects the savagery and brutality of periods which are really by no means remote, only separated from our own, indeed, by two generations, and the manner in which the public accepts and even approves the law of strength which does not stop at cruelty. Among his expressive means, the actor requires no slight degree of physical strength and agility, for feats are required of him which trench on the domain of the acrobat and the clown.

Here, for instance, we have a hero, who by force of circumstances, has been obliged to become a *rônin*, i.e. to forsake his clan and live as a pariah, relying solely on his personal strength, his courage,



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and that it corresponds closely to the deepest instincts of the crowd to which it is addressed. It will unfortunately undergo the disastrous evolution which tends to carry everything in the country in new directions. Kawakami and Sada Yacco have essayed an adaptation of *Patrie*, which travelled from town to town, receiving a favourable reception; and a group of clever young men, thoroughly occidentalised, are initiating the Japanese into the drolleries of vaudevilles which would amuse even the habitués of the Palais Royal or the Nouveautés.

#### THE WRESTLERS

A troupe of wrestlers has arrived. Banners of white linen printed in red and blue characters, flashing from bamboo poles inclined on either side of the street, announce the news to the town. We have only to walk through the quarter, indeed, to meet them strolling about the streets in their light kimonos, with their broad, bestial faces, their long hair drawn up to the tops of their heads in little chignons, their tall figures dominating all the crowd of little people who circulate about them.

They have set up their travelling theatre not far from the river, near the Great Bridge, in the enclosure of a temple, and we pass under the sacred torii to go to the performance. A square raised platform, surrounded by steps, is protected by a canvas canopy upheld by four poles. At the foot of each of these sits an umpire, who has to watch the performance attentively and see that

no infraction of the rules is allowed to pass. All around, the noise of the crowd is only hushed at the most thrilling moments of the struggle. The crowd is a mixed one, without any class divisions, and contains a preponderance of the populace and of geishas, attracted no doubt by their admiration of these tall men.

A man advances on the platform. He wears a stiff costume, with wide trousers and a silk jacket, and on his head a little black cap, like the figures in the beautiful makimonos of the school of Tosa; in his hand he holds an open fan. He gives the names of the wrestlers who are to perform in a falsetto voice, and walks with a hesitating and comic gait.

The two champions rise from the lowest step, where they await their turns; they ascend the two or three stairs slowly, and advancing along the platform to the foot of one of the poles, they dip a little wooden bowl with a long handle into the cold water that stands ready in a large tub. They take a mouthful, which they immediately spit out, wiping their lips afterwards with a sheet of that supple vegetable paper which answers so many purposes in Japan, and is used more especially for handkerchiefs.

Then they advance, still slowly, towards each other to the centre of the circle which is marked out by a thick plaited braid. Face to face, they bend on their shins, make their joints crack, resting their heavy hands on their thighs; they are completely naked, save for a wide sash of black silk which is passed several times between their legs and en-

circles their loins, its long fringes falling on their thighs. Pressing their palms on the carpet, they dry their skin with the salt sprinkled there. Some of them are enormous, with swollen bellies ; others, though gigantic, are well proportioned, and give an impression of superhuman strength.

Observing each other closely, they make a show of lifting a foot with a great effort, and letting it fall heavily on the floor again, as if to adhere there. The position seems unfavourable to them, no doubt, and they return to the water tub to take another drink before resuming their places. At last, after much preparation and a long wait, during which the strain of their vigilance makes the sweat break out upon their skins, they hurl themselves one upon another, gripping each other in their muscular arms, and their hands, gliding over their shining skins, seize the adversary's sash with a firm grip.

Tripping the adversary up by a turn of the leg under his is not forbidden ; but the finest bouts are those in which the strain of muscle alone makes the adversary give way, though his arched feet seem riveted to the floor. In this hand-to-hand encounter they are sensitive, no doubt, to every momentary relaxation of muscle in their opponent, and profit by it to throw him on one side, to make him overstep the boundary, or to pin him with his back to the ground by a violent effort of the loins. Sometimes it happens that a formidable tension enables the latter to recover his balance, and to stand upright again upon the floor, where his feet grip again as firmly as before,



and he regains the advantage. The umpire in his stiff costume, his little fan in his hand, hovers round them all the time, and urges them on to conquer by sharp, yelping exhortations.

The struggle is followed with breathless interest, and the victor is acclaimed by frenzied hurrahs, with which the delight of having won a big bet has a good deal to do sometimes. The two champions separate and go down from the platform on their respective sides, to make way for others.

The end of the last performance is marked by the distribution of prizes to those who have come off victors the greatest number of times. The principal victor receives a bow. He then turns to the crowd and salutes it with the bow bent at the end of his arm according to the consecrated rites, then, making it fly above his head like a windmill, and marking the action by presenting it with outstretched arm, one leg advanced, he receives the applause of the frenzied crowd.

#### DANCING AND THE GEISHAS

Few of the departments of Japanese society work more smoothly and easily than this; and "pleasure," like all other aspects of life in Japan, takes on an artistic appearance which makes it subtly attractive. The schools of dancing are so strictly organised in this country, and custom is so respectful of their fundamental traditions, that they may almost be looked upon as State institutions. In every town, one or more groups of dancing-schools have an



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accountants' office, the mechanism of which is admirably adapted to its functions. Each school, which is under the control of a directress, observes a sum of educational tradition, which, by means of a graduated curriculum of gymnastics, of musical, poetical, and choregraphic rehearsals, train the girl of twelve, who enters as a *maiko*, to become at seventeen or eighteen the *geisha*, in other words, a delicious creature, unparalleled save in ancient Greece, a musician, a singer, a dancer, an artist, and a courtesan, a perfect instrument for the whole gamut of pleasure a man seeks when he escapes from his daily routine, a creature who brings to the haunts where these little holidays take place, her eternal gaiety, her refined and witty grace, the delicacy of her artistic gifts, and that decency in pleasure which gives it an additional charm, a decency for which we Occidentals can only offer the ignoble debauchery of our night-restaurants.

The *geisha*-dances are of two kinds, each of which has its characteristic interest and charm; they take place respectively in tea-houses, where they are introduced to divert the guests during and after a meal, and in a special theatre, where, at certain seasons of the year, dancing fêtes take place which last several days. In the former, pleasure is more subtle and intimate; in the latter, the artistic interest is much more complete.

At five or six o'clock the visitor repairs to the tea-house where the gathering is to take place; he is conducted to a large hall, where the mats are exquisitely fine, the woods precious and

delicately worked, the *fusumas* or screen-papers carefully gilded or silvered; a *kakemono* and a few beautifully arranged branches or flowering sprays in a vase form the decoration of the *toko-noma*; he seats himself by the brazier and awaits the beginning of the entertainment. Gradually, at the opposite end of the hall, figures appear at one of the widely opened doors; first one, then two, then three. They prostrate themselves afar, as if not daring at this first appearance to cross the threshold; then, with little, hasty steps, their toes turned inwards, in spotless white socks, the little servants come and prostrate themselves before each guest. They bring a little lacquered tray mounted on a square pedestal, on which are placed four bowls with covers of lacquered wood or china, containing the first course of the meal: one is empty, ready for the rice which will be brought at the end of the repast, snowy white and smoking hot, in a heavy black lacquered box. A little cup is given for libations of *saké*, and in a paper case are the two chop-sticks, cut out of a single piece of wood, and still adhering at one end. First comes the delicious fish-soup flavoured with lemon and pounded seaweed; then a few slices of eel in a thick sauce of beaten eggs, garnished with mushrooms, lotus-roots, and lily bulbs; slices of raw fish wait only to be dipped in a thick brown sauce to become the freshest, the most savoury, and the most digestible of foods; other fish are fried or grilled, and slices of lobster are prepared in a strongly spiced broth. Meat is very seldom served; sometimes little pieces of

chicken or duck appear, dressed with slices of parsnip, or perhaps a salmis of little birds, larks or snipe. The basis of the meal is always rice, boiled till the grains are properly swollen, and served without seasoning of any sort. It arrives at the end of the meal, and two or three bowls of it are eaten, refreshing the palate by the delicacy of its almost imperceptible flavour. Tea is served after the rice, and very often the diners mix it with the last grains of rice in the bottom of their bowls. The meal concludes with a few slices of fermented beet-root, pickled in a highly flavoured sauce, which takes the place of cheese in Japan.

If you are a *gourmet*, you will do well to visit a certain famous restaurant in one of the lower quarters of Kyoto, and partake of the speciality of the house—a soup made of turtle cut up into long strips and cooked in a broth of *saké* and lemon-juice.

But now, during the course of the meal, at the end of the long hall, new figures make their appearance at the sliding door where the little servants appeared. They advance with the same timidity, one by one, prostrating themselves before crossing the threshold, taking little, short steps, gliding over the mats, prostrating themselves again in the middle of the wide room, and making a slow, profound obeisance before each guest. These are the geishas. They are infinitely more distinguished than the servants. Their features are more refined, their complexions are heightened with paint; their black hair, lustrous with camellia oil, is more cunningly arranged. Their costumes,



though marked by the same severity in their neutral colours, are made of richer stuffs, relieved by the fanciful colouring of the wide sashes, the *obis*. They crouch down on their heels before the guest, and from this moment devote themselves to serving him, and more especially to the replenishment of the *saké* cup, with results very profitable to the establishment. It is a mark of good breeding to dip the *saké* cup into a bowl of fresh water at intervals, to have it filled up to the brim, and to present it to them, that they may drink in their turn.

But other young persons have followed them, and these go through the same ritual of salutations before approaching the guest. They are hardly more than children; their faces are enamelled, so to speak, with paint from the neck to the roots of their hair; their lips are crimson. They wear magnificent robes patterned with birds and flowers in brilliant colours, gaily tinted *obis*, and little wreaths of artificial flowers in their hair. These are the *maikos*, the young pupils. Walking in couples as a rule, they come and sit beside you like little chilly birds huddling together on a branch.

The matron who accompanies all these little people makes a sign, and two or three *geishas* rise and go and sit down at the end of the hall opposite the guests. The *shamisens* emerge from their silken cases; they tune them and begin to sing. Their voices are hoarse and discordant, and the song is punctured by mewing and hiccougling sounds. They start a monotonous chant, with





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DANCE OF GEISHAS.



a more or less lively rhythm, interrupted by brief interjections not unlike the "Ollé, Ollé" of the Spanish malagueñas, designed to stimulate the movements of the dancers. Other *geishas* rise from their places, and three or four standing in a row execute a dance of symmetrical or contrasting gestures and movements, the expressive grace of which comes entirely from the long, slim hands, whose supple fingers have such an eloquent language, and from the nervous feet, which strike the boards with a sharp, fierce tap of the heel, rise under the half-open skirt, straining their supple toes in their fine white socks, or gliding along the mats like a flock of white birds. Their heads, with the hair dressed high, and the puffs cleverly waved, are gracefully inclined as they dance; but all expression is banished from their faces. Sometimes they wave soft silk scarves in their hands; their long sleeves wave round their heads with the sweeping motion of sea-gulls' wings, and the pretty fans which they furl, unfurl, flutter, throw into the air, and catch again, are charming accessories to these airy dances.

Occasionally one among them performs a *pas seul* of more absolute beauty, more faultless style, in which the slow stages of a very poetic action are developed, rendered by the grace of movements, the precise action of certain expressive gestures. To the minds of amateurs these evoke a succession of poetic images with which their memories and imaginations are richly stored.

These charming rhythmic poems are reserved more especially for the theatre. The hall of a

tea-house is not the scene proper to their expressive beauty. After a few hours the hieratic repose of the charming *geishas* breaks down before the familiar gaiety of the little convivial gatherings at which *saké* plays its corrupting part. They smile as they dance; the smile becomes a laugh, and if a guest chooses to come and join the dance he is not repulsed; but at this stage it has become a romp and has lost its grace and impassibility.

The theatrical performances are rare; they take place only four or five times a year, and it is more particularly at Kyoto, where the dancing-schools have preserved the finest tradition, that they should be seen. It happens occasionally that an old directress of a school retires; all the most famous *geishas* then make a point of being present at a crowning performance, which sometimes lasts a whole week, from morning till evening. The stage is very large, the scenery varied, the musical element more important than usual; six or eight *shamisen*-players and as many singers take part in it. There is room for a larger number of performers, and it is not uncommon to see six or eight dancers on the stage at once. The costumes and accessories are rich and exquisitely tasteful. These one might appreciate better if the lighting of the stage were more satisfactory. The flickering light of the great candles stuck on iron poles is not only fatiguing to the eyes, but the fragments of charred wick that fall from them are a constant menace.

## CHAPTER IX

### *THE TEA CEREMONIAL*

The Châ-no-you—Its antiquity—Traditions—The ritual character of the ceremony—The Cha Kai and its subtleties.

CHÂ-NO-YOU.—There is perhaps no custom in the life of the Japanese which manifests his passionate attachment to his traditions more clearly than this, for there is none in which the ancient rites and the lengthy ceremonial are in sharper contrast to that positivism and activity he has learnt from the European.

The tea ceremonial is of great antiquity, if we are to believe that certain priests of the sect of Zen approved it as a salutary means of keeping themselves awake during their midnight services, and that the Abbot Eisai drew up the rules at the beginning of the thirteenth century, to divert the Shôgun Sanetomo (Minamoto) from the temptations of wine. This initial religious phase was succeeded towards the middle of the fourteenth century by a phase of social entertainments of great magnificence. These were given by the Daimios in their palaces, amidst the gems of their collections and the perfume of the most delicate incense. After a meal of curious refinement, the guest took part in a sort of drawing-room game,



being invited by the master of the house to name the special kind of tea which had been served to him. A correct answer ensured the immediate gift of one of the marvellous objects which surrounded him; but this he was not supposed to take away, for all these beautiful things were destined for the band of geishas who had lent the charm of their talents to the little fête. The rules of the ceremony were definitely fixed in the following century by Yoshimasa, when, resigning the Shôgunate, he retired to his delightful palace-temple of Ginka-Kuji at Kyoto, in company of his two favourites, the abbots Shuko and Shinno. The latter was a highly cultured connoisseur, who invented a certain teaspoon, which all great lovers of tea were bound to manufacture for themselves from a fine bamboo stalk.

Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the custom became a positive mania; the gift of a china bowl was the highest mark of favour that an inferior could receive from his superior; in any catastrophe, the utensils of the tea ceremonial were saved before anything else; and tales are told of nobles who, when their castles were taken by assault, died with a bowl of tea in their hands. Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, the terrible warriors, were tea-fanatics. In the autumn of 1587 Hideyoshi issued a veritable edict, enjoining all the tea amateurs in the Empire to gather under the pines of Kitano, near Kyoto, bringing all the objects to be used in the ceremony, which lasted ten days, in the course of which Hideyoshi came to drink with nobles and peasants alike.

Shortly afterwards, in 1594, Hideyoshi summoned to his castle of Fushimi the heads of the principal schools of tea in the kingdom; one of these was Senno Rikyu, the first to collate, purify, and modify the rules of the tea ceremonial, and to give them that character of simplicity and severity which they have retained ever since. The doctrine, the imperious discipline, and the rigorous etiquette to which all participants must still adhere are the very personal work of Rikyu; but he failed to observe a like strictness in his moral conduct, and later, Hideyoshi, weary of his venality and peculation, one day sent him the order to kill himself.

All Japanese houses, save those of the lowest class, contain the characteristic little room called the *tchâ-séki*, specially reserved for the tea ceremonial. It is very small, just large enough to contain the six persons who participate in it, but it is panelled with the most precious and highly finished woods in the house; like all the other rooms, it has a little *tokonoma* for the *kake-mono* and the vase with a flower or a branch of foliage, a kind of alcove with a sliding door, through which the servants come and go, and a ceiling which follows the slope of the roof to the exterior wall. On this side, which adjoins the garden, there is a little casement on a level with the floor, a veritable cat-hole, through which one has to enter on all fours, if I may so express myself. Yet it is only by this opening that you are permitted to enter the *tchâ-séki*, after the master has taken you to walk in his garden stepping

from one flat stone to another in straw sandals, and sitting for a few moments under a little rustic shelter over a bench commanding the prettiest view, which is always of very limited extent in a respectable Japanese garden.

One by one the five guests take off their sandals, and slip through the aperture into the *tchû-séki*. They take their places, sitting on their heels, on a silken cushion, the guest who is to be specially honoured nearest the *tokonoma*. The sliding door opens, and the master of the house appears; he carries all the utensils to be used in the tea ceremony on a lacquered tray. If the festival is complete, it is preceded by a dinner, which he himself serves to his guests; for it is the rule that no servant shall appear.

He bows with his whole body, kneeling, his forehead almost touching the mats, and the guests are expected to return the greeting by bowing very low in their turn. From this moment an almost unbroken silence must be observed while the rites of the ceremony are in progress; but it is considered polite for the principal guest to make some remark on the beauty of the *kakemono* in the *tokonoma*.

The master uncovers a narrow rectangle cut in the floor, and with a goose-feather he flicks the edges of the lacquered hearth, the cinders of which are dyed with tea. He seizes a few glowing embers in a large brazier of hammered iron by means of two silver sticks, fans them with a branch of bleached spindlewood, and sprinkles them with a few grains of incense, which at once



perfume the room. He then places on them the metal teapot, which he has filled with water from a splendid *mitsusashi* of Tamba or Karatsou, using for this purpose a reed ladle with a long bamboo handle. Then with a slight spatula very graceful in form, cut from the knotted stem of the finest brown or speckled bamboo, he takes a few pinches of green tea, which he deposits in a magnificent Corean or Rakouan bowl. This bowl is more or less open in shape according to the season of the year. He pours into it the boiling water from the teapot, and stirs with a rattan brush, the hairs of which are formed of the supple fibres of the wood. A thick green froth rises on the mixture. He then presents the bowl, with a low bow, to the principal guest, who responds with a similar bow, and drinks a mouthful, the bitterness of which is terribly harsh to the throat, handing on the bowl to his neighbour. The thick infusion suffices for the five persons present, each of whom after drinking wipes the edge of the bowl with a piece of soft paper; the last guest finds only a muddy sediment, which he swallows with gusto. The bowl is then passed back from hand to hand; threads of green moss still cling to the inner surface, making a curious effect on the black or pink enamel ground of the Rakous, or the white-and-grey of the Coreans. Each person praises the workmanship, smiles at the fanciful designs of the transparent glazes, sometimes solidified into vitreous globules, and tries to guess from which workshop it came—a problem the owner is fond of putting forward.

Finally, the bowl returns to his hands ; he rinses and dries it, does the same to all the objects he has just used, puts everything in order, covers up the hearth with its lacquered lid, and leaves the room after another ceremonious bow to his guests.

The service—for such it is—is over, with its consecrated rites, its array of formal rules by which every act, every gesture, has been prescribed once for all. The guests go out backwards by the loophole through which they entered, and join the master, who has preceded them into the garden.

*Cha-kai*.—Literally translated: "A gathering on the pretext of tea-drinking." Certain amateurs in a town combine to get up little gatherings of this sort in their houses on certain days. The invitations are sent out, and the guests may, if they choose, go from one house to the other. In each a servant distributes tea and haricot cakes in one of the rooms ; on entering, the guest prostrates himself, the forehead almost touching the ground, the palms of the hands laid upon it. The company crouches on the mats, kneeling, the heels supporting the weight of the body, which is slightly thrown backward. The pale tea is poured into little cups without handles ; its harsh, bitter flavour is not softened by sugar. It is permissible not to eat the sugared sponge-cake handed with it ; but in this case it is *de rigueur* to wrap it in a piece of the fine paper made of vegetable fibre, of which every Japanese carries a packet, and to take it away with you.

Every amateur who is on friendly terms with the



host makes a point of contributing to the decoration of the house, and guests are invited primarily to admire all the things thus brought together. The walls are hung with *boudjin kakemonos*, that is to say, works of a literary character, in which both eyes and intelligence are to find pleasure. They generally date from the end of the eighteenth century or the first half of the nineteenth, and are painted according to the Chinese tradition. They represent landscapes with sharp mountain peaks, piled one behind the other in perspective, with torrents rushing into deep ravines ; in the majority there is no suggestion of a direct impression from Nature, but a dry formula totally devoid of feeling. Western taste will never be able to understand the high prices with which collectors at sales will outbid each other to secure the famous works of Chikuden or Bousson.

Large trays are set out, on which splendid prints are piled with a rare knowledge of values, *kakis*, peaches, and crimson apples. They look as if they had been prepared to be painted in some still-life by a Gauguin. In old baskets with a sombre patina, in vases of sandstone or of bronze, a spray of flowers or a branch loaded with fruit is arranged with infinite art. Numerous schools, frequented by women and young girls, teach nothing but this art, which is based on the most ancient traditions. What subtle taste there was in the combination of a branch of worm-eaten wood splashed with moss, and another branch bearing on its extremity a scarlet pomegranate half open and ready to fall, the two grouped in a fine

celadon vase. In others, the *sanguirai* reared its stems, studded with yellow and red berries; the *mozouren* spread its horizontal twigs, bearing little leaves and long split pods, displaying tightly packed scarlet fruits. The *aqueto*, which bears a flower like the crest of a cock, unfolded its large golden or crimson leaves like flowers, their tips still green before the brilliant hues of decay had invaded them. In little *jardinières* of decorated china stood dwarf shrubs, maples or pines, trained by the cunning orthopædy of the garden, spreading out their twisted branches, and showing all the dignity and fine proportions of secular trees.

Exquisite things stand about on little lacquered tables with inverted legs, stoneware from Corea, bronzes, lacquers. The visitors take them up, look at them, criticise them. Gently and caressingly, with pious, reverent hands, an old *Châ-jin*, with gold spectacles and a black silk skull-cap, took up a jade *kogo* of pale amethyst colour, the lid of which had been carved in a yellowish vein of the jade, and examined it carefully. All the Religion of Beauty was in his gesture.

## CHAPTER X

### *JAPANESE GARDENS*

Their special character and esoteric significance—Shape of gardens—The Imperial gardens at Kyoto—The Koishikawa gardens—Baron Iwasaki's garden at Tokio,

THE Japanese garden is an esoteric creation, full of a mysterious significance not very comprehensible to a European. It is not necessarily very small, though this has been constantly affirmed, but when attached to a modest town-dwelling its limits are circumscribed; a few square metres of stones and dwarf shrubs often realise the dream of its creator. Even in the many beautiful gardens of greater extent, the horizon is always limited, as if the Japanese soul loved introspection, and preferred to those vast expanses in which thought loses itself, the humble limits in which its dream becomes concise and definite, to find expression in a few poetic features surprisingly foreshortened.

Instead of affecting a symmetrical and logical form, akin to an architectural plan, like the French garden, the Japanese, like the English pleasaunce, is laid out on more fanciful and sinuous lines, with a greater variation of planes, and turns to account every accident of the ground, even when



it does not create them. But there is more art in the Japanese than in the English garden, for there is no form nor element in the former which has not been deeply studied and carefully chosen; each has a strong significance, historical, religious, or poetical, designed to call forth a whole world of memories and emotions in the imagination of those who walk in it. One site reproduces in miniature one of the famous landscapes of Japan, sung by poets, immortalised by painters, and still honoured by traditional pilgrimages; others evoke some Buddhist meaning yet deeper and more mysterious. They are invariably objective pretexts for abstract ideas, such as Peace, Purity, or Old Age. These ideas are expressed in the subtlest forms, to which Nature has to bow. Here she is a humble subject, and the gardener bends her to his will. The various stages of the growth of a tree have all been fixed in advance; they are to result in a form which long centuries of observation have decreed for all time. It is marvellous to see how the artist has preserved its individuality, the beauty of its bearing, the development of its lines, and how he seems to have trained it to that supreme degree of amplitude and nobility in which it will produce its maximum effect. Some little stone bridge is designed to recall a famous bridge of the Empire by its curve and the supple line of its balustrade; some stone, brought at great expense from a very distant region, suggests some profound idea, religious or moral, which will be the source and centre of a continual chain of ideas and sensations.



The art of the garden is therefore a complete art, based upon a body of precepts and rules, subject, we may suppose, to a complete exegesis, different schools giving different interpretations to the principles. The quiet Western dreamer who comes to these delicious solitary gardens in quest only of sensations has no idea of the world of thought by which they are penetrated, the endless evocation of which will hang about his footsteps. Let us pass through them, asking nothing but impressions of Nature from them; these will be so fresh and numerous that few gardens in the world will furnish their like.

Some of the finest gardens are at Kyoto, and were the delightful retreats where certain Japanese sovereigns, tired of power, and in love with silence, peace, and oblivion, shut themselves up with faithful friends or artistic counsellors to spend calm days in the most refined pleasures. Famous among them is Kinkajuji, the gilded pavilion built in 1397 by Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, a delicate structure on the bank of a little pond; it has three storeys, the upper one completely gilded, ceilings, walls, and floors, as well as the balconies which run round the gallery, and the overhanging eaves that shelter it. These fine lacquers, with their rich patina, are still reflected in the tranquil surface of the little lake encircled by fine trees. In this narrow retreat, bounded by the wooded hill against which it stands, and furrowed by paths leading to the small scattered buildings in which the tea ceremony was performed, the Shôgun watched the slow passage of the hours

in the midst of complicated rites, which would have proved irksome indeed to all free activities.

Ginkakuji, the silver pavilion, is in a still more retired spot, and is a more essentially intellectual creation. The vain clamour of the world spends itself far from the regions where the great trees of the forest which cover the slopes of the mountain of Hiei-Zan shed their impenetrable peace. The Shôgun Ashikaga Yoshimasa chose this retreat in 1479, after his abdication. A slight clearing was made among the huge trees of this forest region, and a delicious garden was created, with winding alleys and formal thickets ; the mountain streams were led by artificial channels to feed a pond where the lotus spreads its broad spatulas, and two hillocks of white sand, their summits smoothly levelled, were the sublime heights on which grave questions of æsthetics were discussed. Sosmi and Shuko, the Shôgun's favourite companions, designed these gardens for the celebration of their charming ceremonial festivals.

At the other extremity of the great valley in which Kyoto stretches its languorous length, on the banks of the river Katsura, are the great gardens of Katsura, now one of the summer residences of the Mikado. Here we have not one of those limited gardens which can be traversed in a few strides, but a veritable park, with all its diversities of prospect. This must be a purely artificial creation, for it stands in the midst of the plain, and no former forest can have furnished the shade and the growth of its huge trees. A thick bamboo grove bounds the horizon on the side



IMPERIAL GARDEN, TOKIO.



A GARDEN AT TOKIO.

1937



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nearest the valley, and the waters of the river were diverted to feed a large lake dotted with little islands connected by narrow stone bridges. There are great boulders with, no doubt, particular memories; shrubs cut into artificial shapes of special significance. Stone lanterns show their monumental silhouettes here and there; tiny pavilions commanding short vistas, built of rare but simple woods, entirely without ornament, recall those refined *Châ-no-youon* which Kobori Enshû, the great artistic master of these regions, employed all the delicate delights of art for the diversion of his master.

Of all the beautiful gardens of Kyoto the one most attractive to the Western eye is that of Shugaku-in, which Go-Mizunoô made at the base of the Hieizan mountains in the eighteenth century. Within its vast circumference there is every variety of aspect; there are sequestered nooks, where nothing distracts the meditations of the solitary; admirable distant views, where all Kyoto stretches out before him in the changing play of light. The site was skilfully chosen; the mountain forms a narrow plateau here before dropping in gentle declivities to the plain. A narrow dyke was constructed to retain the water within the harmonious curves of a beautiful lake, and this dyke, studded with low shrubs cut in the manner most favourable to the view, forms the most delightful of terraces. Hence one may note the successive inequalities of the soil forming long stages downwards to the valley, where peasants were busily engaged in agriculture at

the autumn season when I looked upon it ; the rice was cut and bound in sheaves, and already in the tracks of the reapers came the black oxen, ploughing up the rich, moist earth. The fine lake behind the dyke describes a sinuous circle, gliding at one point beneath the dense shadow of the groves that clothe the mountain against which it is set ; here it receives the murmurous cascades into which the mountain rills break gently. Great willows dip their long, supple tresses in its quiet waves, and groups of pines are happily diversified by groups of maples. These groups of *mommiji* were composed with such art that each of them produces in autumn a harmony of varied colour, from the most tender reds and yellows to the most violent. A little peninsula runs out to the middle of the lake. Its abrupt shores and the tortuous pines that crown its rocks suggest some famous spot of Matsushima ; the exquisitely graceful little stone bridge, with its wooden roof, is two hundred years old, and is an exact copy of a famous Chinese bridge ; it was a gift from the Daimio of Etchigo to the Mikado.

There are also some fine gardens at Tokio ; one, Koishikawa, is very famous, and is visited by all travellers. But it has been handed over to the military authorities, and is now enclosed within the limits of the Arsenal ; it has suffered terribly from neglect, and there is nothing more depressing than a Japanese garden which is not perfectly kept. It is changed indeed since the days when the Prince of Mito planned to make it a place

of delights, in which all the most famous sites of the Tokaido should be reproduced, magically foreshortened. The lotus-covered pond is so overgrown that the water is completely hidden; the bridges of red lacquered wood are scaling and crumbling; the knotted roots of the pines obstruct the walks and cast up the soil; the birds indeed find a peaceful and safe retreat here, and every minute the kingfisher's sapphire and emerald wing flashes across the space.

A most complete contrast is to be found at the other end of the town. Crossing the Sumida, we come to a quarter full of docks and work-sheds; and it is surprising to find oneself before an iron gate, beyond which a large sanded court gives access to a great brick house with a flight of steps. It is one of Baron Isawaki's dwellings. Large, airy vestibules, rooms hung with pictures and provided with divans and other furniture, a great hall containing a splendid collection of china in glass cases, a conservatory of rare orchids; then a few steps to descend, a few clusters of green shrubs to walk round, and lo! we are in Japan again. A large lake lies before us, so varied in line, forming so many inlets, dotted by so many islets connected by stone bridges, winding about so many little rock-strewn hills, disappearing in such sinuous threads of water between tiny promontories, that the whole seems illimitable, and one gets a perfect illusion of immensity. All human clamour dies away on the confines of this beautiful park, so near a great town, and set in the midst of a busy quarter; everything is wrapt



in an extraordinary peace. We might be gazing at the youth of the world, and it is Nature in all her immensity, in all her purity, in all the aspects least suggestive of the hand of man, which is here presented to us by a supreme and mysterious artifice. On the confines of two seasons, oppressed by the brooding heat and the dazzling sunshine of a summer noon, or shrouded in the mists of mournful autumn, this fair garden, in its magnificence or its melancholy, is as poignant as the most exquisite nature-poem imaginable. It suggests nothing limited, narrow, or stunted, nothing but vast and vigorous sensations. It is a microcosm, but one which reflects grandiose images. In a subdued, quiescent atmosphere, enormous carp leap out of the water in pursuit of flies, making large circles, which die away gently towards the shore; crows exchange their sinister signals among the great trees; from time to time they fly languidly from one to the other. In a more delicate light, air and water seem to vibrate unceasingly; great dragon-flies flick their transparent depths; under a rock, two rabbits perform their toilet, caressing their ears with the grace of cats; wild ducks rise, and with loud cries and beating of wings, skim the water to roost in a more tranquil bay. Wonderful birds flash their brilliant, gem-like plumage in space, with little shrill cries. Beyond an impenetrable thicket of bamboos a mountain appears with a cleft in the summit; its grassy slopes are studded with clusters of rhododendrons; then the vegetation gradually becomes sparser; ascending by little zig-zag tracks, we

pass this wooded zone, and come to the pasture-grounds of the high plateaux ; three more strides and we reach the neck itself. In the space of forty feet we have had all the sensations of an Alpine ascent. From the summit, overlooking the whole garden, its waters, its woods, its hills, one is astonished to find that a ball, vigorously thrown, might easily reach the limits of the domain. Meanwhile, the crows, perched in the great trees all around, utter furious cries, proclaiming their wrath at the intruder who dares to profane a spot evidently sacred to their councils. Then, stepping on large, flat stones in the paths, which enable one to traverse the whole garden dryfoot, passing over the delicately curved granite bridges, and by the little wooden pavilions where the tea-ceremony takes place, we make the tour of the great lake with its enchanting shores, the tranquil mirror of this miniature world. But suddenly an alley brings us in sight of a great building of pink bricks, with its heavy mass and its definite lines. The spell is broken, and the Japanese dream melts away in a moment.

## CHAPTER XI

### *KYOTO—ITS PALACES AND TEMPLES*

The character of Kyoto—The Goshō or Imperial palace—The Nijo or ancient palace of the Shōguns—Their internal decoration—The temple-palace of Nishi-Hongwanji and its painted and lacquered decorations—Walks among the suburban temples; the Kitano-Tenjin The Kinkakuji—The Toji—The Ninnaji—The Myōshinji—The Daitokuji—The Jinkakuji—The Eikwandō and the Nanzenji—The Choin-in—The Tō-ji—The Renge-on—Kyōmi-zu and the Kōfukuji.

THE charm of certain towns is as indefinable as that of certain women. It is something seductive and fascinating, an exquisite grace combined with infinite sweetness, great elegance of manners, supreme distinction, the caress of a smile, the nobility of a fine gesture—traits which instinctively call forth love. It is impossible to resist the charm of Kyoto; I know some who have left their souls there.

In the first place, Kyoto has not yielded to the passion for Western fashions to the same degree as Tokio. It has shown a haughtier front to the invader. It has left politics and commerce to others, and is unwilling that industries should come and pollute the waters of its river, and obscure the clear air of its skies. It is still sincerely



attached to its traditions, to the charming simplicity of its little industries, all so closely interwoven with art ; to the gay idleness of its streets, in which the whole population loves to loiter without fear of motor-cars ; to its festivals and spectacles, the periodical recurrence of which is no bar to fancy and invention. It has remained a city of pleasure, of refined pleasure, inasmuch as there is no people who think of this more frequently or seize opportunities of enjoying it more eagerly. There is a proverb which says : Kyo nô kida ore—Osaka nô kuida ôre (Kyoto, what one wears—Osaka, what one eats), thus contrasting the epicurean materialism of the one with the refined grace of the other.

After a sojourn in such surroundings it is difficult indeed to readapt oneself to one of our Western centres, where life resembles a race in which the runners press forward to an illusory goal they will never reach, stopping at the various stages of the route only to die, breathless and exhausted. How regretfully does one recall the charming manners of the most highly civilised people on earth, if by civilisation we mean not the greater sum of knowledge which makes a man his neighbour's superior to the extent of being able to destroy or subdue him, but the most exquisite forms of politeness and courtesy, the most sincere interchange of service and goodwill. These are found on every step of the social ladder ; the welcome one receives from the humble basket-maker on whose mat one takes a seat is expressed in a formula no less exquisite than that accorded



one by the family of an ancient Daimio. How often among this people, who but yesterday were living under the thrall of feudalism, have I found graven on the heart those words we have inscribed on the pediments of our museums, but not in our hearts. How much they would lose if they took us for their exemplars! In that evolution they are now undergoing, an evolution which is carrying them along with perilous rapidity, what will eventually be the fate of the *inkyô*, of him who at the age of fifty usually deemed himself to have finished his share of the world's work, made over all his fortune to his family, and thenceforth, secure in the provision made for him by his children under the double guarantee of law and public opinion, set himself to enjoy a pleasant leisure, occupied solely by delicate joys, in which Nature, Art, and Poetry collaborated to the highest ends?

The charm of Kyoto is gradual and insinuating, and, as is always the case in Japan, one loves it the more the more one penetrates into its life and manners.

After the abandonment of Nara in 784 the sovereigns of Japan hesitated for some time over the choice of a spot for the seat of Empire, in the great valley of the province of Yamashiro; in 793 they finally decided for Uda. They gave the name of Héian-Jô, or Kyoto, to the new city, and built their palace in the very centre of it. This palace was destroyed by fire in 1177, and three years later the great Minister Kiyomori transferred the seat of government to Fukuwara, the Hiogo of

## KYOTO—PALACES AND TEMPLES 111

our days. But the Court soon returned to Kyoto. Twice again city and palace succumbed to the flames, and each time they were reconstructed as far as possible on the original plan. After the foundation of Yedo in 1594, Kyoto gradually lost in extent and importance.

It lies in an immense plain on either side of the river Kamôgawa, which flows slowly over a vast stony bed, the shingly shores of which are every evening transformed into restaurant terraces, where all Kyoto assembles to take the air in the midst of innumerable paper-lanterns. In the morning the washermen spread their linen here, and market-gardeners, before going to market, come to rinse in the running water their enormous white parsnips, the national basis of vegetable food. On the horizon, and from every part of the low-built city, rise high hills, clothed in a royal mantle of dense forest. It is within the folds of these forest valleys that most of the ancient temples lie hidden, in incomparable positions, surrounded by their ancient parks. Some of these spots are the objects of a traditional devotion; joyous crowds invade them periodically. They come to see the cherry- or plum-trees in blossom, the autumn moon rising, the reddening of the maples. These festivals produce a kind of intoxication, during which all serious business is abandoned. The whole populace lives only to celebrate the periodic return of a season, and the fugitive moment when Nature puts on one of her sweetest or most magnificent adornments. Delightful indeed is it to mingle with the throng at such

moments ; to participate in the naïve joy of all these beings, to encounter their smiling, tranquil faces ; to pass among the groups gathered under the great trees before the consecrated views and landscapes, to glorify the beauty of their country, and enjoy exquisite moments in the midst of a refined society in which nothing is vulgar, and where all one's relations with one's fellow-men, great or humble, are marked by the same natural courtesy.

The town itself is no more picturesque than the others. It has the same vast districts, in which one passes along between little houses all of the same kind. There are no very ancient buildings, and no remnants of architecture which call up memories of the past. Certain quarters seem to have more character than others, perhaps because of the small industries carried on by numerous groups.

The immense quarters which the river divides are irregular in extent ; the suburbs of Awata and Kyomitsu on the left bank, backed by the great hills of the neighbourhood, have been circumscribed by these in their development, and have not attained the size and importance of those on the right bank.

In the interior of the town itself, the Imperial Palace (Goshô) covers an immense area, if we take the circumference of its walls into account. This earth-wall, covered with plaster, surmounted by a crest in the form of a narrow roof, formerly enclosed the dwellings of the Court nobles (Kuge) grouped round the palace. These buildings dis-





PORTRAIT OF PRINCE SHOTOKU-TAISHI, NINNAJI  
TEMPLE, KYOTO.

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$$\theta_{\text{eff}} = \frac{\pi}{2} - \arctan \left( \frac{B_0}{A_0} \right) + \arctan \left( \frac{B_1}{A_1} \right)$$
[illegible]



tion of light-coloured woods, large mural surfaces of fine plaster, and red lacquered columns, still gives a solemn and grandiose character to an interior of this kind.

The immense hall known as the Shishin-den, where the coronation of the Mikados and the New Year audiences took place, must have been still more imposing in character. It was originally decorated with a series of panels representing the Sages of China, painted in 888 by the famous artist Kose nô Kanaoka. What are we to think of the present *copies of copies* which purport to transmit to us a reflection of these perished glories?

A wide corridor leads hence to the Ko-Goshô, the Little Palace, where three rooms decorated by modern artists open on a beautiful garden; it is separated by another long gallery from a suite of rooms, the Gakumonjo, all differently decorated about forty years ago, where the Court held its artistic assemblies, poetical and musical. It is not till we penetrate into a part of the palace divided into a dozen relatively small rooms that we come upon the habitual residence of the Mikados, where so many generations of sovereigns lived amidst their wives and their chamberlains, remote from their subjects, and died, knowing nothing of their empire.

The Palace of Nijo, the ancient seat of the Shôguns, raised as a kind of affirmation of power by Nobunaga in 1569, in the Mikado's own city, is a much more interesting building. The present palace, happily in excellent preservation, dates

only from 1601. Iesyasu desired to have a *pied-à-terre* in Kyoto, when he came from Yedo to confer with the Mikado. His successors, the Tokougawa Shôguns, successively added to its decorative splendours. The exterior is similar to that of the fine fortress-castles so characteristic of the Tokougawa Shôguns, with its sloping walls of unjointed stones, cyclopean in structure, its great gates, and its pavilions, with their curving roofs perched upon the walls themselves, as in the castles of Osaka, Himeji, Nagoya, or Tokio.

Two great porches surmounted by a Chinese roof give access, as in all Japanese civil and religious buildings, to the palace. Large panels, richly carved with peonies and phœnixes attributed to Jingoro, are arranged as lintels over the doors. It is said that Hideyoshi removed them from his famous palace at Fushimi. Entering the Palace, a suite of immense rooms leads to a long lateral corridor. Great decorative richness and luxury at once manifest themselves in the fine coffered ceilings, lacquered, and painted with various subjects evidently inspired by the ceilings of the Ming palaces at Pekin, and in the beauty of the compositions painted on the walls, many of them on a gilded background, which adds greatly to the general impression of sumptuous splendour. Above the great panels or the fine *fusumas* which form the mural decoration there are generally friezes, called *rammas*, of pierced woodwork, painted and gilded, carved in a masterly fashion with birds, flowers, and animals. By a miracle of artistic skill, the motives on either side are quite different,



though, looking at one side, it is difficult to understand how the artist could possibly have made use of the planes of the wood for a new composition. There are some, also attributed to Hidari Jingoro, representing peacocks amongst twigs of pine, and on the reverse large full-blown peonies, which are marvellous masterpieces of decorative sculpture, finer than anything he carved at Nikko.

Let us pass through these admirable rooms in due order. Nearly all of them bear the name of the principal decorative motive painted in them. The greatest artists of the day took part in their adornment. Three of the principal rooms are painted with a succession of tigers moving among bamboos, and rendered with wonderful variety, in the various attitudes of repose, vigilance, flight, and combat. In the room of the Imperial envoy, Tanyu painted enormous green maples, the broadly treated trunks and branches of which occupy several metres of the composition, their outlines relieved against a background of gold, oxydised and subdued by an exquisite patina for the supreme satisfaction of the eye. One of these large maples, its leaves already crimsoned by autumn, occupies the entire surface of the spacious *tokonoma*. In another room he painted large green pine-trees, their stems splashed with lichens; and in yet another, great eagles perched on pine-trees, or cranes flying or feeding, the decorative beauty of which is enhanced by the magnificent gold backgrounds. In the vast audience-chamber, decorated with peacocks and pine-trees, the decorative splendour culminates; yet the gold

always remains light and discreet, a prodigy no other people could have accomplished in compositions of such a size. In the beautiful hall, Kuro-jo-in, Naonobou painted on a very subdued gold background cherry-trees in full blossom, the white body-colour of the flowers forming a most delicate harmony.

In another room he made an exquisite arrangement of large sheaves of white chrysanthemums against a feathery hedge of bamboos on a gold ground ; above are long friezes of fans negligently displayed. A suite of several rooms was decorated with scenes in the Chinese manner by Koï in a sepia of pale inks on a soft gold ground, while the *tokonoma* has a large snow scene admirably composed. One of the rooms shows a composition very famous in Japan by the name of *Naonobou nô nure Sagi*, representing a hero perched on the prow of a fishing-boat, a motive of which Naonobou made a work of extraordinary charm.

Before dealing with those visits to the temples, which at Kyoto form a unique series of artistic pilgrimages, I think it well to single out one, which, like all the rest, indeed, combines the three functions of a place of prayer, a monastery, and a palace. Every Japanese temple, in fact, contains a hall, more or less vast, with altars, where the priests officiate and the faithful pray, the apartments where the priests live, and the reception-rooms, which were often used by the sovereign, the Shôguns, or other great personages, as visitors or travellers.

Nishi-Hongwanji, one of the finest temples

of Kyoto, contains some rooms so sumptuously decorated, and so similar to those of the Nijo, in which the same great masters of the School of Kano, the official painters of the period, worked, that I think it will be more logical to describe it here.

The temple itself, which dates from about 1591, is of vast proportions, built, according to rule, with the rarest woods, and decorated with the greatest art; the doors, the ceilings, the columns, every detail of the architecture, bear the impress of the highest taste and the most careful selection. The Amidadô, adjoining the temple, is of smaller dimensions, but shows no less clearly a determination to create a perfect work of art.

But it is the apartments of Nishi-Hongwanji which give it its truly extraordinary beauty. The principal entrance is a splendid gate, decorated on the surface and on each side with pierced panels admirably carved by Jingoro: one of these represents a rider on a prancing horse with astonishing realism. The rooms open one into the other, each more magnificently decorated than the last, with wild duck and clusters of chrysanthemums on a gold ground by Yusetsu, great trees and birds in the style of Tosa, and hunting scenes in the Chinese manner by Kano-Kô. One of these rooms has beautiful doors of cedar-wood, ornamented with bronze fittings, delicately chased and gilded, and furnished with two thick purple cords with silken tassels; two of the panels contain compositions of Chinese figures cunningly





THE GREAT COLUMNED HALL DECORATED AT THE END WITH A PAINTING BY TANYU, TEMPLE-PALACE  
OF NISHI-HONGWANJI AT KYOTO (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY).







have the faces and the garments of the Celestial Empire, the somewhat severe reds and greens of which harmonise admirably with the value of the background. The composition and arrangement are masterly, and are developed with a breadth and facility which recall Veronese.

Here, after the first few steps, we are able to recognise that it was not only in little subjects that Japanese artists found expression for their decorative sense; for the decoration of their temples and palaces they had to essay vast compositions, in which they treated every kind of motive; but they touched all with equal mastery, and it would be impossible to enumerate all the *fusumas* and screens on which they expended their decorative vigour, without ever exhausting it. They created masterpieces as great in their own genre as the frescoes and decorative canvases of the Italians, or the tapestries of the Flemings and the French.

It is delightful to recall these visits to the temples of Kyoto, the departure in the morning in the *djinrikisha*, its rapid descent of the slopes to the verdant gardens of Kiyomitsu; the vaulted branches of huge trees which screen some beautiful and solitary temple in every fold of the wooded mountain-side. They slumber far from the tumult of the town, in the deep peace of country and forest, till the curious visitor breaks in upon their dream. Sometimes they lie at so great a distance that the expedition takes up the whole day, and he does not return till evening, having taken care to carry his lunch, which he will eat in one

of the reception rooms of the temple, seated on *tatamis*, before some beautiful *fusuma* painted with a delicate landscape gay with animal life.

How charming is the welcome that awaits him ! But he must know at which door to present himself in this complex agglomeration of buildings which makes up a temple, often a veritable city in itself. He claps his hands, and at the signal a young novice appears, and asks his pleasure. The visitor takes off his shoes, and follows his guide. If the temple is one habitually visited by strangers, the novice will lead him into a room furnished with a table and chairs, the presence of which is supposed to give an air of civilisation ! If not, he will enter a chamber deliciously bare and empty, and will take a seat on cushions that will be brought to him. The abbot appears in his robe of pale yellow cotton, wearing round his neck a kind of necklace of coloured silk. He prostrates himself several times, interspersing the questions by which he inquires his guest's pleasure, by formulæ of the most refined courtesy and delicate welcome. The novice then reappears, bearing the tea apparatus ; the abbot pours out a little for each person in a small cup, unless, desiring to do you special honour, he himself prepares that thick and bitter beverage, green tea. A long, slow conversation follows ; if you do not bear your part patiently, you may give up all hope of seeing some of the fine paintings whose existence you suspect. But all things come to him who waits, and at last



the precious masterpieces are brought in in their boxes, unrolled, and hung up in the *tokonoma* or on the walls.

No private or official document exists to serve as guide. The classification of the artistic treasures preserved in Japanese temples and considered as national monuments was decreed by law some twenty-five years ago, and carried out on two occasions by a commission, but no list was ever published. In default of a personal inquiry and study, which would be both difficult and laborious, one can form no idea of the immense number of Japanese and Chinese masterpieces they contain. By a providential dispensation, whereas in China, social upheavals have caused the destruction of much that was preserved, Japan, inaccessible to alien incursions till the middle of the nineteenth century, has carefully preserved all that many successive generations had religiously received from China, who is revered as the mother and instructress, and stands in the same relation to Japan as Greece and Rome to the Europe of the Middle Ages and modern times.

The history of Chinese painting remains to be written from beginning to end, and could be written only in Japan. It should be one of the finest chapters in the history of art. The page is entirely blank ; no one has yet been able to trace a single word upon it.

In the short pilgrimage we are about to take through the principal temples of Kyoto and Yamato, perhaps it may interest some of my readers if I enumerate some of the most exquisite

examples of Chinese and Japanese painting and sculpture I was privileged to see. This may serve perhaps as the point of departure for that long and difficult study which some courageous enthusiast must undertake some day. For him who brings a soul sensitive to beauty to such a task, exquisite pleasures are in store.

It would be impossible to know all the temples of Yamato and Yamashiro without devoting years to the study, so numerous are they in these two provinces of old Japan, and in Nara and Kyoto: with the one exception of Mr. Fenellosa, I do not think any European can boast of knowing even the majority of them. The following notes do not aspire to do more than indicate the greatest masterpieces of painting and sculpture preserved in some of them. As they are dispersed, often at great distances one from another, it will, I think, be best to adopt a topographical rather than a chronological or hierarchical order, which will make these notes of more practical utility on the spot. The position of Kyoto indicates the natural division to be followed: that of the two banks of the river.

## I

On the right bank of the Kamogawa, where the greater part of the town is situated, but beyond its boundaries, and in the open country, stands the first group of temples, in the delicious plain that is bounded by the hills of Kinukasayama. The first halt is made directly after leaving the town, at the Kitano-Tenjin, a perfect type of the

Shinto temple, with its innumerable stone lanterns, its ex-votos, and a succession of little chapels bordering a prayer-road, where the faithful pause after every few steps for their orisons. Great popular fêtes take place in this district on the twenty-fifth of each month. A series of famous *makimonos*, long attributed to Nobuzane, which belonged to this temple, are now removed to the museum of Kyoto.

A little farther, at the foot of the hills, is the Kinkakuji, the most charming monument the Ashikaga have left us of their refined taste. In 1397 the Shôgun Yoshimitsu, handing over his power to his young son, came to satisfy his delicate tastes in this exquisite retreat. On the banks of the most poetic of lakes, enclosed in a belt of great trees, he built the golden pavilion, which is mirrored in the waters, and had it decorated by the sculptor Unkei and the painter Masanobou; on the slope of the hill he constructed the little pavilion, and inaugurated the tea-ceremonies, in which so many generations have handed on the ritual of a new religion. In a neighbouring building, used as apartments, there are still some *fusumas* executed by Jakuchu in black and white (cocks and hens, banana trees and vine-branches). A clever *kakemono* by Sotatsu shows a horseman, with a remarkable effect of foreshortening in the horse, and two charming landscapes by Sesson.

The Toji-in, another memorial of an Ashikaga-Takauji of the fourteenth century, contains a series of sculptured portraits of all the Shôguns of this dynasty, an iconography of great historic



rather than artistic interest. A certain number of these were executed long after the lifetime of the persons represented. Individual character is very strongly rendered, in the manner in which the Japanese sculptors excelled, and the costumes, with the short robes, the black caps, and the uplifted sticks in the hands, are strikingly realistic.

In this same western district a group of monasteries was founded in 886 by the Emperor Koko, and later two Emperors came to live here in retreat, Uda in 899, and Shujaku from 901 to 931. These monasteries were the Ninnaji, the buildings of which covered delicious hills overgrown with cherry-trees, whose spring blossoms attracted crowds to mingle the worship of Buddha with that of Nature. But in 1887 a disastrous fire broke out, the terrible ravages of which have not been repaired, and large bare tracts recall the catastrophe. The Ninnaji formerly possessed a very interesting portrait of Shotoku-Taishi. The ancient attribution to Kanaoka has been called in question; it is now in the Tokio museum. In Ninnamimura, the neighbouring village, lived the famous potter Ninsei, who borrowed the root of his name from his domicile, and the temples, which were also called Omûro Goshô, gave a name to one series of his potteries, Omûro Yaki.

Of all the group, the most important is certainly Myôshinji; its fine buildings are better preserved than the rest; its temples, its monasteries, and its gardens cover an immense space surrounded by a great wall. Passing through the vast entrance gate, the visitor follows long avenues enclosed



between walls and paved with stone flags. On every side there are more temple porches, their noble architecture enriched by splendid wood-carving; great courtyards, the fine sand of which is constantly raked; and lofty trees, rising always just at the spot where the outlines and the fanciful arabesque of their branches will enhance the beauty of the scene. Wherever one goes in Japan, Art and Nature are always closely allied; and if Nature is often subordinated to Art, it never seems to suffer from its subjection, and preserves the apparent freedom of independence. He who has once seen can never forget the majestic entrance; the vast flagged space, flanked by other portals with superb isolated roofs, looking like great triumphal arches; the temples that lie behind these, with their double storeys and overhanging roofs; Hôdo, and its great ceiling with a dragon painted by Tanyu; Kyodo, with its vast octagonal revolving library; all the massive structures of rare woods, to which time has given a rich patina; and among them all, the gigantic trees, the eternal adornment of the old Japanese temples, which leave impressions of freshness and beauty after every pilgrimage.

The ancient temple of Myôshinji, founded in the fourteenth century by the abbot Kwanzan-Kokushi, was the retreat of the Emperor Hanazono, and may be considered the type of these beautiful semi-religious, semi-imperial residences. This statement sufficiently indicates the wonderful decoration bestowed upon it, and the treasures of art which it contained. Not indeed that all

its possessions are masterpieces ; at all periods its acquisitions were of a mixed character, and many of the *fusuma* decorations, many of the *kakemonos* shown to the traveller, are in reality very mediocre works, which I shall pass over rapidly, merely enumerating them. Of such are : the three mediocre *fusumas* decorated with herons by Tanyu ; the insignificant *Dharma* by Masanobou ; the weak and empty *Hotei*, somewhat hastily ascribed to Mokkei ; the three paintings of *Dharma*, *Hotei*, and *Bukan*, the faded inks and feeble character of which bear as little intrinsic evidence of the authorship of Ri-Ryomin as do the *Kwannon*, the *Kanzan*, and the *Jittoku* of that of Kaô.

The principal temple, on the other hand, possesses some splendid Choshikyos, notably the *Kwannon*, a little short in proportion, but of such a delicate rose colour, her robe decorated with medallions subtly touched with gold that gleam through a transparent veil ; some fine *Rakkans* by Mekkouan, and others by Zengetsou, fine in attitude and full of distinction in their neutral colouring, but lacking the energy of drawing and the power which would make it permissible to attribute them to a Chinese painter of the Song dynasty. They are, however, vastly superior to those very conventional works, poor in colour and destitute of character, which are attributed to a painter of the Yuan dynasty. Some of the decorative works are very unequal in quality. There are screens by Yusho, with a tiger and a dragon, and some chrysanthemums on a golden

ground which are very ordinary; others, with important Chinese dignitaries, very frank in colour and magnificent in style, after the manner of Eitokou or Sanrakou. Another, attributed to Motonobou, with fans scattered about on a dark background flecked with gold, is exquisite; among four fine *fusumas* by Shiunbokou there is one with a huge pine loaded with snow, a masterpiece of the black-and-white designs he carried to such perfection in his albums, showing an amazing suppleness and a velvety softness in the opposition of the two tones. But the exceptional treasures of Myôshinji, which make it a place of pilgrimage for all lovers of art who visit Japan, are the two series of paintings by Motonobou there preserved. They show two aspects of the genius of that prodigious master, one of the greatest of Japan, who gave such prestige to the school of Kano in its very beginnings, at the dawn of the fifteenth century. They consist of two series of *fusumas*, which the emperor Reegen fortunately caused to be mounted as *kakemonos* seventy years after their execution, to save them from the ravages of time or man; they have consequently come down to us in an extraordinary state of preservation. They are preserved in the Reiunin, where Motonobou spent several summers studying the rules of the sect Zen, and where he painted them. He painted at the same time the portrait of his master, the priest Daikiu-Kokushi, in his gold-embroidered vestments and his Chinese shoes—a portrait which impresses by its obvious fidelity and its careful, though somewhat dry and hard execution: por-



traiture was not the genre in which Motonobou's talent was to reach its highest development. The first series contains forty-nine *fusumas* of large dimensions—landscapes in the Chinese style, with persons walking in them, marked by that brusque and somewhat angular drawing of rocks and trees which distinguishes one of Motonobou's manners. Some of the landscapes are continued in several *fusumas*, thus forming vast compositions. They are executed in colour, with very light yellows and bistres; one is a pure landscape without figures, representing geese going to drink. The second series, which contains fifty-three *fusumas* mounted as *kakemonos*, is, on the other hand, in Motonobou's more normal manner, that of the pure Kanos, in black and white; but with what suavity and delicacy he harmonised them! The white of his beautiful paper, supple, rich, and generous, afforded him an ideal background for his delicate greys and deep blacks—fit media for the evocation of those landscapes, in which a haze of dreams seems always to float! Throughout the easy and happy execution, how evident is the fine structure of the drawing, the solidity of the planes, and, whatever may have been said to the contrary, the depths of the perspective. It is impossible to forget the beautiful snow-scene, the mountain background, with the hurricane sweeping obliquely across it, stripping the willows in its passage, and the grey, dead water, a mirror which reflects the desolate face of nature.

Not far from Arashi-yama—those picturesque defiles where the river Katsura debouches as it



leaves the mountains, the slopes of which are covered with dense forests of pine, cherry-trees, and maples, making it one of the most joyous places of pilgrimage in spring and autumn—there are two temples, one of which, the Koryuji, is one of the oldest Buddhist temples, founded by Shotoku Taishi in 604. None of the present building is so early in date, and it is said that the main structure was burnt down in 1150, and rebuilt with materials saved from the flames. The other temple, the Seiryuji, is much less ancient, dating only from about two centuries ago. It contains a famous gilded chapel, dedicated to Sakia-Muni.

The two temples, the Daitokuji and the Tō-ji, which, together with the Myōshinji are the most important on this bank of the river, are at the two extremities of the city, at a great distance one from another.

The Daitokuji, which belongs to the Zen sect, was founded by Daito-Kokushi, who became its abbot at the beginning of the fourteenth century. In the course of centuries it acquired immense importance, and, like the Myōshinji, it is not merely a temple, but a collection of temples (there are no less than eighteen!), with considerable possessions in mortmain, and a wonderful accumulation of artistic treasures. These latter are far from intact: Japanese and American collectors have made terrible breaches in them; but such as they remain, they are protected by official classification, and they offer exquisite specimens for the student of Chinese and Japanese painting. The Daitokuji is far out in the country, to the north-west of the

town; a vast, uninterrupted wall surrounds it. Whichever of the great porches we pass through we find the same large and grandiose arrangement of gates like triumphal arches, of temples, pagodas, belfries, shelters for drums; but here all is peculiarly vast and impressive in its majesty and silence, and especially rich in immense trees, which seem to defy the insidious attacks of time, as if in this land the sap were so vigorous that it continues to rise in the branches for centuries.

The Shinjouân, or Temple of the Emerald, has a series of beautiful rooms, with *fusumas* painted by the greatest masters of the period. In the central hall, the landscapes in black and white, with geese on the banks of a river, and herons among bamboos, are by Jasokou. One little room has some delicious misty landscapes by Soami, and in another of unrivalled splendour, Eitokou has spread the branches of great brown pine-trees on a checkered gold ground, beside a sheet of blue water without perspective, audaciously decorative with its touches of gold, quite in the spirit of the artist's great ancestors, of the school of Tosa, to whom Mitsuoki shows still closer affinities in his decoration of a great tree covered with doves. In the narrow *tokonomas* there is a long series of beautiful *kakemonos*: a *Kwannon* in black and white, meditating, seated upon a rock, by Jasokou; a Sakia-Muni seated, lost in dreams, draped in a superb robe of faded rose colour that falls in silky, undulating folds: there is an indescribable suavity and unction in the modelling, and the face, inclined over space, seems to sound infinity with the utmost

calm. On the silk of the *kakemono*, Rikyu, the painter's contemporary, the aesthete and legislator of the tea-ceremonial, wrote a poem. The Shinjôan was his temple; he made the plans of the little *chaseki* after the designs of his master, the bonze Shukô, who brought back from China the rules for making powdered green tea, the drink of the supreme ceremonial, and also the design for the Teigyoku, the garden of jade, the pearl of gardens. By Shunkyo, the Chinese master, there are two fighting cocks, whose blood-red crests and ruffled feathers show by the bravura of their execution how much Okyo was indebted to this master, a portion of whose name he adopted. By the early Chinese master, Kisokotei, there is a *Kwannon* with delicate features, gently touched by a caressing brush; another *Kwannon* is by Gekko, a pupil of Song Mokkei. The goddess, round of face, and aquiline of nose, is seated near a cascade; she is painted in a reddish golden atmosphere. The black strokes are extraordinarily supple, revealing the type and style that inspired Chodensu.

A very fine Buddhist painting, the attribution of which to Kanaoka cannot be unreservedly accepted, represents *Kwannon* in rose colour, black, and gold, swathed in long diaphanous scarves, and standing on a lotus; at the bottom of the composition, a man in a boat and a child with clasped hands in a little skiff, brave the anger of the flood. A fine and typically Chinese landscape by Shiubun represents a mountain pass, with pine-trees swathed in bands of mist.



The temple of Rîôko-in has also its *chaseki* on the plans of Kobori-Enshu, the rival of Rikyu, the other arbiter of the tea-ceremonial, and its famous decoration of ravens on a tree beside a lake, by Tanyu. Its store of Chinese *kakemonos* is admirable. Among these are: the splendid series of sixteen *Rakkans* by Ganki, comparable to those in the Boston museum; the exquisite little landscape by Baen, a kiosque and some twisted trees overlooking a mountain lake; two prodigious works by Mokkei, a still-life of various fruits, and a branch of chestnut, executed in black ink intermixed with blue, so fluid, so melting on the surface of the silk, that I know of no water-colour to compare with it in subtlety, mystery, and airy lightness of execution—a true work of genius, for it is essentially creative. It owed nothing to any artistic precedent, and a painter of the tenth century, under the Song dynasty in China, produced it playfully, ingenuously, and freely, little thinking what slow and mysterious repercussions such works would awaken in the souls of artists throughout the ages, beginning with those of Japan. I may further mention the fine *Jizo*, the flesh tints softened by a rosy bloom, the costume a fine brownish purple gown with bands of subdued gold. This is a characteristically Japanese work, instinct with the nobility of thought that marked the great period which preceded Kamakura.

In a neighbouring temple, Koto-in, two landscapes attributed to the famous Godoshi—mountain scenes in the heart of      na, great rocky heights with yawning      sides of which the



pinces clung despairingly—are admirable for the truth with which the successive planes are indicated, and the rocks drawn and painted; two little figures conversing upon a narrow overhanging ledge indicate the scale and the relative proportion of objects with astonishing mastery.

At the temple of Kô-Hôan, Kobori-Enshu designed a little garden with imitations of the eight famous views of Lake Seiko. It boasts also some fine paintings by Sumiyoshi (notably a seated Buddha in a transparent pink robe), by Chodensu (a *Kwannon* and a fine *Dharma* with large dilated eyes, his head bound with a dull red drapery), by Nôami (a seated *Dharma* meditating by the water-side, and geese flying over reeds, with bent necks and inflected heads, or crying in the grass, marvels of suavity and fluidity); and, above all, by Sesshiu. This master is represented by four famous *kakemonos* of *Rakkans* seated on rocks or descending from heaven on clouds. Their faces are contracted or grimacing; their garments fall in a torrent of complicated folds. The outline in black is magnificent, nervous, and passionate. An oval seal concealed among the grey shadows of the composition, and enclosed between two strokes, indicates Sesshiu's own appreciation of the work, for he reserved his sign manual for his favourite creations. The box bears an inscription in Kobori-Enshû's admirable handwriting, vouching for the authenticity of the work, and recording his opinion of it. Three other *kakemonos* are all very curious and original: they are painted with little discs, containing a *Kwannon* seated by cascades, or standing on

a carp borne up by the waves, or on a rock, her face in profile. The colour is peculiar, a yellow of a warm brownish tone; the long faces, somewhat Chinese in type, are in white body-colour. Finally, on another sheet there is nothing but a perfect circle in black, and a signature, simply the *tour de force* of a circumference drawn by one sure sweep of the brush. This achievement of Sesshiu's, a truly unique exploit, is held in a veneration indicated by the three boxes in which it is preserved and the marvellous border of Chinese silk which enframes it. It would not perhaps be amiss to rejuvenate an admirable composition of a goose with rich black feet, dropping into the reeds, which may very well have been painted by Sesshiu or Sesson, rather than the early master Mokkei.

The Kô-Hôan is no less rich in pottery, for in all the temples of the Daitokuji the popularity of the tea-ceremony resulted in the collection of precious objects for its celebration. I spent some delectable moments in the abbot's little room, before the concave hearth, where the kettle was singing on the red-hot embers, as my host slowly unfastened the cords of four or five boxes which the novice brought from the *kura*. They disclosed a little Chinese bowl (*gosu*), thickly and brilliantly enamelled with pale rose-colour; on the inner rim this was relieved by a broad circular zone of pale brown, decorated with vague characters in greenish black. A fine Corean bowl of very thin china was but slightly enamelled with a somewhat dry glaze, through which the yellowish clay, and in the interior long streaks of creamy white were visible; an

exquisite Corean *Kofuko* stood rather high, on a low base. It was delicately crackled, and splashed with subdued red to suggest the splendour of the maples in autumn. But the most extraordinary of these treasures was an old shallow *Tchosen*, slightly crackled, tinged with pink, the blackish clay of which, slightly scaled of its enamel in the interior, seems to exude flat yellowish drops on the exterior, that rise in lumps underneath; besides its soft envelope of wadded silk, it has four boxes to protect it. Kizaimon, one of its owners, gave it three hundred years ago to the Daimio Honda, from whom it passed to Count Ianasawa, finally coming into the possession of Nakamura Soseiton, of the region of Izumi.

Finally, the Hô-jo, which directs the whole of the Daitokuji, is, like the other temples, rich in works of art. It has rooms decorated with freely sketched landscapes in black and white by Tanyu; but its greatest treasures are its splendid Chinese Buddhist paintings. It is interesting to compare the majestic and grandiose *Kwannon* by Godoshi, which shows the goddess seated, her white veils disclosing her brownish-pink breast and robe of rose and gold, with another *Kwannon* ascribed to Kanaoka (acquired by the museum of the Trocadero in 1900), painted in marvellous velvety blacks bordered with delicate gold, and completed by branches of coral in the lower part of the composition—a work of supreme refinement, in which the Japanese added something of their suave and delicate spirit to the grandiose vision and vigorous execution of the Chinese. A series



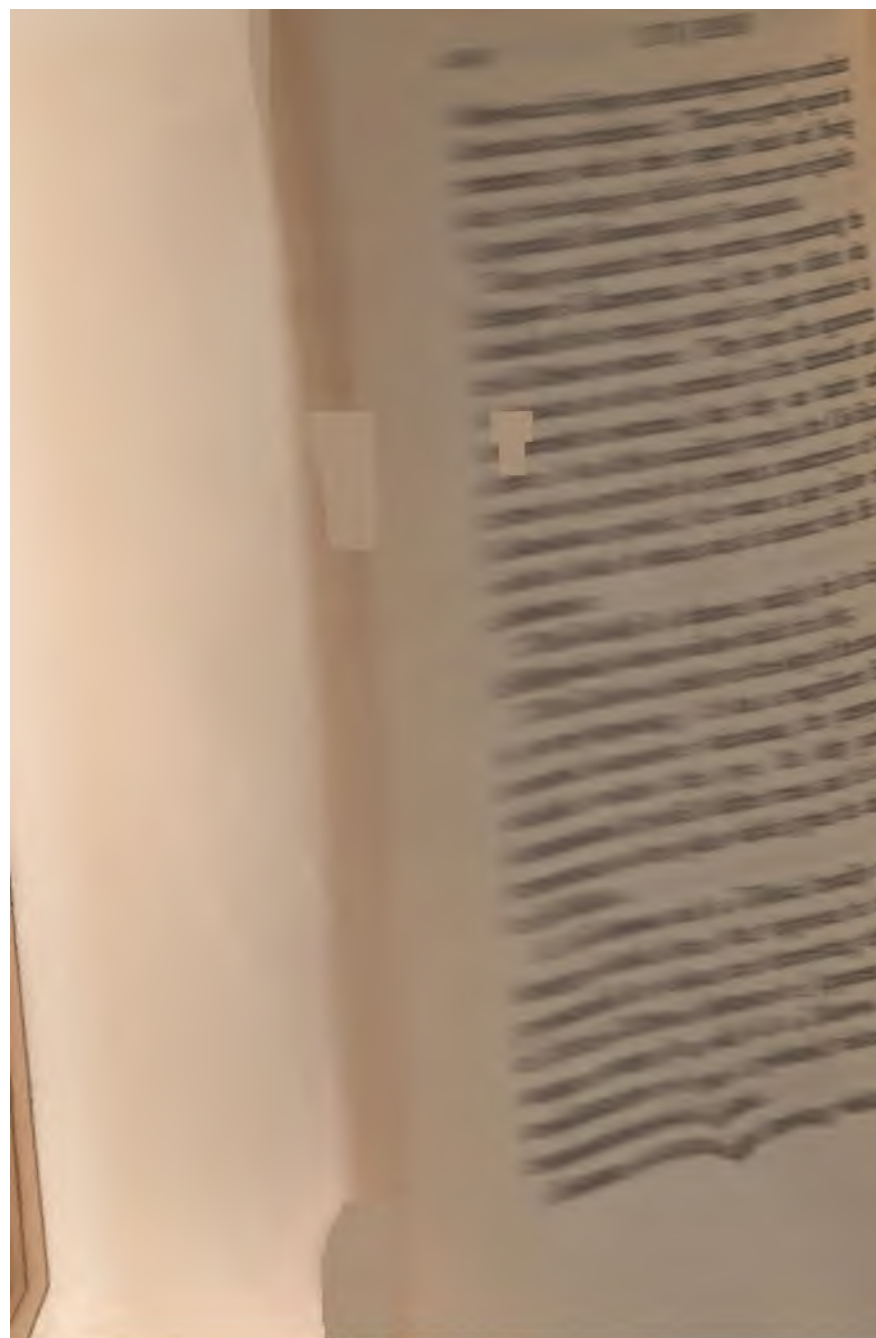


THE JINKAKUJI, OR SILVER PAVILION, AT KYOTO  
(END OF FOURTEENTH CENTURY).



THE TEMPLE OF KYOMI-ZU AT KYOTO.







FUSUMAS OF A ROOM IN THE TEMPLE OF SANZENJI AT KYOTO. PAINTING IN BLACK AND WHITE BY KANO MOTONOBU (SIXTEENTH CENTURY).



*Monju* and *Fugen*, seated respectively on a couchant lion and an elephant. These are greatly superior in treatment, with their superb heads and flowing hair; the design is full of character and originality. A graceful *Kwannon* is by Yasunobou.

Tanyu painted three portraits, representing the Emperor Kameyama and the two abbots who founded the temple, seated in great armchairs in the Chinese manner. They have the appearance of *pasticci* on the portraits of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but they are harder and drier. In a little auxiliary temple, the Chô-Shoin, there is a portrait of a priest, a masterpiece of the Kamakura period; he wears a pale yellow robe with a black border, and is instinct with life and character.

The Kodaiji is famous mainly for its relics of Hideyoshi, whose widow built it in 1605.

The Choin-in, built on the slope of the mountain, is very imposing. It has a magnificent flight of several successive staircases, the perspective of which evades the eye. Its lofty portals are dominated by still loftier trees, and it is built in terraces, on the plan which gives its chief beauty to Nikko.

A *Gamma* and a *Tekkai*, broadly executed in heavy black lines, but vigorous in drawing and powerful in colour, are interesting demonstrations of the Chinese influence in Japanese art; and the same may be said of a *Dharma* with strange, meditative eyes, a profound vision which evokes memories of Ganki.

Some outline drawings which were the first



FUSUMAS OF A ROOM IN THE TEMPLE OF SANZEN-JI AT KYOTO. PAINTING IN BLACK AND WHITE BY KANO MOTONOBU (SIXTEENTH CENTURY).



(From *L'Histoire Générale de l'Art du Japon*.)





studies for figures of the five hundred *Rakkans* are curious and intensely Chinese in character. They have gained nothing by their execution in vivid colours, lacking in harmony. A large portrait of the first abbot of the Tofukuji, Shohitsu Kokuchi, signed Mincho (Chodensu)—the face, with its half-closed eyes very well drawn, the figure robed in a brown gown with broad black stripes, and seated in a high-backed chair covered with green stuff—is not very harmonious either. The hands are poorly drawn, and the work is in all points inferior to the very similar portrait of a priest for which the Museum of the Louvre owes a debt of eternal gratitude to Charles Gillot.

A portrait of a priest seated on a Chinese chair of bent-wood, and very similar in treatment, would lead us to suppose that this portrait convention itself came from China to Japan. It is ascribed to Mokkei. Two savage *Rakkans* by Kandensu are very individual.

Confronting Kyoto, on the southern confines of the town, are the temples of Tō-ji, the foundation of which dates from the middle of the eighth century. We know that Kobo-Daishi, on his return from China, lived at Tō-ji till he departed to found the monastery of Koya-San in the mountains of Yamato. The Tō-ji is full of memories of him, and legend, which has ascribed many masterpieces of all kinds to him throughout Japan, connects his name with certain paintings religiously preserved here. Traditions so ancient, serious, and respectable may very probably agree

with fact in this instance. A large number of the Tô-ji paintings are deposited in the Kyoto Museum, but the temple has retained three remarkable series of *kakemonos*, and a famous screen of six panels in very bad preservation, which, in spite of its recent attribution to Motomitsu, I believe to be Chinese, in accordance with the tradition that it was a gift to Kobo-Daishi from the Emperor Li-Hung-Chi-Yuang-Sun (713-756).

One of the *kakemono* series is attributed to Takuma Shôga. The sheets were formerly mounted as a screen, and represent the twelve gods, *Juniten*. The figures are admirable in their noble serenity of expression, and are painted in rich but subdued values, perfect in harmony; one of them, the Moon, painted in profile (which is exceptional), presents a rabbit in a crescent which she supports with both hands. Her long, thin body is draped in a clinging material, falling in vertical folds, which makes a harmonious envelope of yellow and gold.

But notwithstanding their real beauty, what are these beside the twelve *Juniten* attributed, not without good reason, to Kobo-Daishi? They show the religious art of Japan in its most glorious culmination. By their expressive vigour of drawing, their powerful colour, their terrible visions of divinity that overwhelms the soul, or serene peace that calms it, their sonorous chords and dulcet harmonies, they are unique as works of art designed to snatch man for a moment from earth, and transport him into the immeasurable depths of a metaphysical dream. The gentle

Japanese imagination could not conjure up such a dream; it came to Japan from the visions of India, transmitted by vigorous Chinese thought. But recreating it in the purifying fire of her own genius, she produced these incomparable works of art, making them creations of the mind, as well as supreme examples of decoration. I saw them on the walls of a room in the Tō-ji, the twelve great figures of gods, so mighty that the slight partition seemed to tremble under them; and it will be long before they reach the decorative destination where they could produce their grandiose effect to the full. For, a minute later, and they were restored to the coffer, with its heavy golden clamps, which the priests had last consented to open twenty years ago. Each god is seated confronting the spectator on the lotus; their bare torsos, drawn with delicate lines and modelled in pink, are adorned with a few ornaments of dull gold; skirts of red, faded green, or brown, are patterned with golden medallions; on either side of each god, a person is seated at his feet, also facing the spectator. There are terrible gods and gentle gods, visions of hell and visions of Paradise. Fugen, the Wind, is rigid in his armour, surrounded by fluttering banderoles, his menacing eyes fixed on the inexorable goal. But Suiten, the Water, has fresh and luminous carnations, of a strange, transparent, lunar whiteness, set off by golden ornaments. Her head is bound with blue, but with a faint hortensia blue that enhances the gentleness and sweetness of her face.

After these, the series of five gods of super-



natural powers, also attributed to Kobo-Daishi, admirable as they are, lose something of their effect. *Fudo Gozanze*, *Kongoyasha*, *Daitoku*, *Goundari Miyô*, have a plurality of heads and arms. They are painted in blue tones, which time has turned green in places; their crimson mouths vociferate, their arms gesticulate, and their terrible silhouettes are relieved against a background of scarlet flames.

The Tô-ji has retained a portion of its sculptured treasures, among them, an immense *Kwannon* with thirty arms, in gilded wood, standing, and surrounded by her four guardian deities, in armour, standing also, straight and slim, trampling upon demons; a large *Fudô*, attributed to Kobo-Daishi, a calm and noble figure holding a sword; the arms and torso are models of expressive vigour; a divinity with three heads and four arms, in unpolished wood, seated on a lotus, which is upheld by three geese painted white; an extraordinary god of fury with three heads, trampling upon three vanquished figures; and in a reliquary, an *Emmé-Jizo* in wood, heavy of aspect, and encumbered by folds of drapery. The most curious among these sculptures is a series of five divinities (*Go dai Kiokuzo*), mounted on five animals—an elephant, a lion, a horse, a griffin, and a peacock. These are beneficent gods, dispensers of material treasures. They are coarsely chiselled in blackened wood, without grace or delicacy; the bodies are thin, the long faces rather puffy. According to the tradition, they were brought back from China by Kobo-Daishi fifteen hundred years ago. They

reveal an unmistakable Hindoo influence, and it is not impossible that some day some such distant origin may be established for them.

## II

Although the Kamogawa cuts Kyoto into two towns, that on the left bank, lying as it does between the river and the neighbouring mountains, has not been able to develop to the same extent as that on the right. Between the mountains of this beautiful Higashyama range, which are covered by a royal mantle of forests, interrupted by lovely valleys sheltering mysterious temples, stretches a long quarter, the principal centres of which are Gion and Kyomitsu. The accidents of the soil, its rapid slopes, its excrescences, its verdant hollows, make it exceedingly picturesque. It is the potters' quarter, where whole streets are devoted to the display of every kind of utensil, in the manufacture of which the soul of the ancient potters still survives. It is the most charming district of Kyoto, for here the traveller finds the unexpected at every turn. For several leagues he passes through a series of enchantments few cities of the world can offer, as he follows the slopes of the hills, along roads bordered by gardens, under the dense foliage of immense evergreen trees, or of those whose crimsoning leaves have been already kindled by the autumn sun, coming at intervals upon openings that afford grand panoramas of the other town. Here Kyoto appears in her most fascinating aspect, and here, as always in Japan, Art and wild Nature combine to charm.

Splendid temples, nestling among parks and gardens, are scattered all over these hills, which are almost impenetrable, and have no paths. They remain in a perfectly wild state, though, in the West, their nearness to the city and the European love of exercise and discovery would have made them into popular promenades. The temples are the objective of the Japanese in their expeditions; each has its annual festival on a fixed date, to say nothing of the innumerable occasions when joyous crowds sally forth to see the autumn moon rise, the cherry or plumtrees in blossom, the *mommiji* in the splendour of their crimson foliage. These are occasions of a kind of popular intoxication, to which the divine *saké* sometimes contributes.

We have already visited the sanctuaries of Jinkakuji, Kurodani, and Eikwandô, the treasures of Nanzenji, the grandiose site of Chion-in, and the beautiful temple of Renge-o-in, or Sanju-Sangendô, where we have the unique spectacle of an immense hall containing a thousand statues of Kwannon with eleven faces each. They are ranged on stages rising one behind the other, and stand proud and upright in their armour of golden lacquer. Although the type is a fixed one, it is strange to see by what subtle shades each face is differentiated. In the long gallery behind the temple are some admirable lacquered wooden statues of Shi-Tennos, some of which are also deposited in the Kyoto Museum. They are among the most admirable masterpieces of Unkei, a gifted sculptor of the twelfth century.





WALLS OF THE NIJO, PALACE OF THE SHÔGUNS AT KYOTO.



TEMPLE OF RENGE-O-IN AT KYOTO.





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On the summit of this quarter of Kyōmi-zu, dominated by the fine five-storeyed Yasaka pagoda, which commands a view of the whole valley, rises one of the most popular temples in the Yamashiro district. It is preceded by a street of shops for the sale of religious wares, and throughout the year pilgrims throng to the temple of Kyōmizudera, sacred to Kwannon. When the great red entrance gate has been passed, a wide staircase leads to a little preliminary temple, which communicates with the large building by a lateral gallery. Here, as is so often the case in Japan, the monument is on a plan necessitated by the natural situation, and owes part of its effect to its harmony with surrounding Nature. There is at this spot an immense and very deep ravine, overgrown with bushes, and refreshed by streams of running water and cascades, where the faithful descend by innumerable steps to make religious ablutions. Overhanging this ravine, which in autumn blazes with the glowing tints of the maple, under the magic of the setting sun, the temple is built on gigantic piles, on monstrous tree trunks which buttress it against the hill-side. A large portico of massive square wooden pillars surrounds it, dominating the ravine and the vast heat-land of city and plain. From this colossal balcony the spectator enjoys the most complete panorama of earth and sky. Projecting from the temple are two little porticos, which peep out from its immense roof. This is one of the most beautiful things imaginable in the arrangement of its harmonious curves: the covering of closely packed slips of

wood, darkened by time, has become like a splendid pall of purple velvet.

The buildings of Tofukuji, which date from the thirteenth century, rise over another ravine less imposing in character, which is traversed by bridges and long covered porticoes. It is situated well outside the town, in a park as solitary as that of the Daitokuji. The great Japanese painter Chodensu, also called Mincho, lived a monastic life here, and the temple still preserves some of his finest paintings, among them a *Death of Buddha*, the largest painting in Japan, which is only unrolled once a year, on the festival of November 17, in the enormous hall of one of the temples, where it is hoisted to the ceiling by means of a windlass.

A work more remarkable than this as regards quality is an immense Kwannon by Chodensu, seated on a rock against which the waves are breaking, in the midst of rolling clouds. It is drawn with a sure, firm touch, and painted in white body-colour, and has the decorative beauty of a fine tapestry.

## CHAPTER XII

### *NARA*

Fallen greatness, the nobility of Nara—The park—The herds of tame deer—The forest temples—The Kasuga-no-miya—The Shin-Yaku-Shiji—The Kofukuji—The To-Daiji—The gigantic Dai-Butsu—The imperial treasure of the Shyō-sō-in—The temples of the plain—The Hokkei-ji—The Saidai-ji—The Toshō-Dai-ji—The Yakushi-ji.

THIS is the very heart of old Japan, where it first awoke to a consciousness of nationality. In this old capital of the eighth century a flower of civilisation unfolded, which had not many rivals under other skies. Down to this time its sovereigns, dominated by the strange superstition according to which it was impossible to live in a place where an ancestor or a predecessor had died, had abandoned the ancient capitals to found new ones. These perpetual changes, which prevented the building of anything durable, have left no souvenir to the memory of man. It was not until Chinese civilisation, transmitted to Japan by Corea, had struck root in the soil that the Japanese could grasp the idea of something definite and durable. Then Nara was founded, and under seven successive sovereigns, from 709 to 784, developed the splendours of an incomparable era in peace and security. It has fallen sadly from



its ancient glory, and now occupies barely a tenth of its former superficies; the greater part of the town, which extended into the plain, has disappeared, leaving no trace of its existence. The modern town, on the slopes of the green hills, occupies the final undulations of fine forest-clad mountains, which still shelter a few beautiful temples. It is to these that visitors come. They are still animated by a certain amount of life, and pilgrims have not forgotten the way to them. But the others—those which are isolated in the plain, having long lost touch with the world—are shorn of their ancient splendour; each day brings them a little nearer to decay. They are infinitely melancholy, and the extraordinary treasures of ancient sculpture which they have preserved are the more moving for the pervading silence and oblivion, among which their proud beauty seems to find consolation for everything, even for being no longer understood.

The student must come to Nara to discover that there were for several centuries workshops of Japanese sculptors who carved in wood or cast in bronze prodigious images, which, in their ideal and mystic beauty, their intensity of life and character, rival the classic masterpieces of Egyptian, Greek, and French art. True, their domain was limited to two great artistic tendencies, from which their creators never sought to deviate—the representation of the gods, and the representation of priests. Civil representations are extremely rare, and likewise those of a decorative nature, which, as a rule, partake of a religious character. But in

their two great genres they achieved the sublime. Every visit to the temples of Nara and Horiuji confirms this, and the critical investigations of the twentieth century will tend to proclaim the truth. This is one of the last fields left to explore ; and until Japanese archæology has been systematised, we shall continue to ignore it in Europe.

Beautiful indeed is Nara, slumbering in its memories of the past, in the green casket of its forests and rice-fields. It was not for the little provincial town, busy with its little industries, its little commerce, that the majestic park spread its imposing avenues to the neighbouring forests, the vigorous growth of its great trees, the calm of its vast greenswards, where herds of tame deer wander. Something which has disappeared is lacking in this fair spot, and this something, dead for ever, fills the soul with melancholy. It is floating in the air, and takes possession of one at the hour when, in Japan, day melts so rapidly into night. A little lake, exquisitely graceful in its curving outline, lies in a hollow at the foot of the terrace on which stands the great pagoda ; it nestles between it and the first houses of the town. The huge pagoda that overhangs it is too large to see itself mirrored in the waters ; the little quiet lake seems rather to belong to the friendly houses that fringe its banks. On every side lights appear behind the paper window-panes, and Japanese shadows flit across them ; slow nasal chants rise to the accompaniment of the *shamisens* which prelude the little fêtes of all the neighbouring restaurants.

In the noble and ancient park there are wide alleys which converge to the edge of the great wild forest that covers the mountain; fawns and does, with great languorous eyes, come thrusting their soft muzzles in quest of the cakes which are set out on the stalls of the retailers. There are some five hundred of these gentle creatures. Chasing or killing them is strictly forbidden; they belong to the temples, and are accounted sacred. Strange to say, a dead one has never been seen: when they feel death approaching, they must go away to await it in the remotest recesses of the forest.

One of the wide avenues soon leads into the thicket. A close and uninterrupted line of stone lanterns on each side indicates the approach to a temple: their little shutters of thick paper are smoky from the candles lighted in them yearly on the great fête of February 3.

After the temples of Isé and Izumo, Kasuga-no-Miya is one of the most famous Shinto sanctuaries of Japan. It was founded in 767 and dedicated to the ancestor of the Fujiwara family. Like all the Shinto temples, it is remarkable for its perfect simplicity, contrasting strongly with the decorative richness of the Buddhist temples. It is surprising to find nothing representative of the divinity to which prayers can be addressed, save the symbolic mirror and sword. In a special apartment, beside a very curious table with eight feet, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and known as the Kasuga-Choku, are preserved the splendid armour and the helmet of Yoshit-suné, brother of the first Shôgun Yoritomo, and one of the most popular heroes of



Japan. This famous armour, of pierced and gilded bronze, ornamented with birds and bamboos, and the extraordinary winged helmet, were much admired at the Japanese Exhibition in Paris, in 1900.

Continuing on the forest-paths to the south, one emerges on the confines of the town, in a solitary quarter of gardens, among which is the Shin-Yaku-Shiji, the Temple of a Hundred Medicines. As is generally the case in all the temples of the Yamato in the regions of Nara and Horiuji, the arrangements here are somewhat novel. We have already encountered them in some of the temples of Kyoto ; but as the sculptures which would have made them interesting have disappeared, I did not linger over them. Here all the temples have retained some of their sculptures, and the others have been transferred to the museum of Nara. In the vast enclosure which constitutes a temple there is always a large quadrangular structure high above the ground, generally raised on enormous flat stones, and often surrounded by a portico about a metre from the ground and protected by a roof with huge overhanging eaves. There are no interior divisions, merely a central platform, on which stand the statues, the weight of which is very considerable when they are of bronze. There is no trace of internal decoration ; the place is bare and barn-like. A gigantic Buddha is usually installed in the middle, with a little altar before him at which a priest can recite the service ; but neglect and abandonment seem to reign in these vast structures. The immense doors groan dolorously



when they are opened to admit a little light ; a terrible dampness strikes a chill to the bones of the visitor. The formidable divinities seem so remote, so inaccessible, lost in their eternal dream, or so threatening when their wrathful gaze pursues you, that it is difficult to suppose that any mortal can ever have come to seek consolation in prayer in these places.

At the Shir-Yaku-Shiji, four guardian gods in armour, of painted and gilded earthenware, are grouped round a great wooden Buddha. In a little reliquary chapel there is a small bronze Kwannon. A seated priest, in painted wood, holding a lotus flower in his hand, is covered with inscriptions on the back. A little statuette of Shotoku-Taishi as a child shows him standing with clasped hands, in the same position as the similar statue in the Nara Museum.

The temple is occupied by nuns. In the *tokonoma* of their reception-room there is a large *kakemono* of the time of the Fujiwara, representing the death of Buddha. It is painted in high tones of green and yellow, and the weeping figures, wringing their hands and gesticulating, are not unlike certain Entombments by Donatello or Riccio in their dramatic expression and composition.

In the same quarter, rather nearer to the town, is the Kofukuji, one of the most famous temples of Japan, originally founded in 710. Before the removal of some of its sculptures to the Nara Museum, it was one of the most wonderful treasure-houses of Buddhist statuary in Japan ; and

the specimens which remain, in a great hall furnished with glass cases, are among the masterpieces of this art. In the Kondo, on the vast central platform, a gigantic figure of a seated Buddha, in gilded wood, is accompanied by the two customary statues of colossal Bosatsous, standing in the act of benediction. In the four corners are the Shi-Tennô, the four gods of heaven who protect the earth from the attacks of demons. These, in their splendid armour, brandishing sword or lance in attitudes of calm and august power, with tranquil looks, trampling underfoot the malevolent gnome, are magnificent types of Strength, the buckler of virtue and conqueror of evil. It was an admirable theme to offer to the sculptor. For several centuries they sought to realise the ideal beauty of these four types in innumerable statues, giving them an expression of pitiless rigour, of inexorable severity towards evil, and of a noble and austere justice—gentle to the good, terrible to the wicked. Painting and gold lacquer, giving richness and colour to these figures, made them precious objects, highly picturesque and expressive. In another of the Kofukuji buildings, the Nanen-dô, six statues of seated priests, in ample robes, which spread about them in supple folds, holding censers in their hands, carry on their meditations and their prayers in the shadow of this retreat. Their faces have a very individual force of expression, their glass eyes all the intensity of life. The lines of the mouth show such a resigned bitterness, the veins of the forehead so much profound thought, that it makes one uneasy

to feel all these keen looks encountering one's own, penetrating one with all the mute interrogations which the meditation of centuries has enriched with such profound thought. One of them has a proud, energetic countenance, calm and steadfast, envisaging life with a direct gaze; another, with clasped hands, is a sublime representation of fervent prayer in his intense concentration of all the powers of thought; yet another, with painfully contracted features, is pathetic, a poor, distracted soul, seeking some moral standpoint, earnestly desired and fervently implored. All these statues are haunting in their expressive beauty and plastic nobility. They are among the purest and most beautiful sculptures in the world, the most grandiose in their breadth and simplicity, the most touching in their intimate sincerity. They show us that prior to the Kamakura period an admirable art flourished in Japan under the Fujiwara of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

In the adjoining To-Kando, on the east, are two wonderful figures of Benten and Taishaku, Japanese representations of the Hindoo Brahma and Indra, in gilded and lacquered wood. They are standing, draped in supple tunics, falling in slow, calm folds, forming long sleeves over the wrists, describing harmonious curves over the legs, which they scarcely conceal, and revealing a portion of the bust, which is protected by finely wrought armour. The noble calm and serene majesty of these figures has a certain martial character which irresistibly suggests the antique Minerva.





ARCHAIC BRONZE STATUE FROM  
THE TEMPLE OF HORIJI,  
IN THE NARA MUSEUM.  
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PAINTED LEAF OF A SCREEN IN  
THE TREASURE OF SHYÔ-  
SÔ-IN, NARA.



BRONZE STATUE IN THE TEMPLE  
OF YAKUSHI-JI, NARA.





At the other extremity of the wooded hills of which the Kasuga-no-Miya forms the centre are the famous temples of To-Darji. The San-Gwatsû-dô also contains several masterpieces of sculpture, among them a gigantic Kwannon in lacquered and gilded wood, surrounded by her two satellites in polychrome clay, calm, pure figures, and her ten guardian gods in armour and helmets, asserting authority and divine power; an extraordinary Fudo, seated, one leg doubled under him, brandishing a sword in his right hand, his mouth contorted with vociferation. On his left, a terrible god, his hair streaming as if on some wind of horror, presses his hand to his forehead, as if to calm the impulse of passion, and at his right a gentler figure, with soft and almost feminine features, seems to bring into the threatening atmosphere a breath of that conciliatory kindness and eternal sweetness so essential to the human soul. A little further is the Ni-Gwatsû-dô, perched on its high piles and clinging to the hillside, the woods of which are murmurous with the tinkle of cascades. The wide gallery that runs round it commands one of the most beautiful views imaginable: the spectator gazes out over the whole wide plain, where ancient Nara formerly occupied vast spaces a little to the right. A gigantic cryptomeria, stretching out its ample branches horizontally, one above the other, forms the foreground of this grandiose landscape. Passing over it and over the grey roofs of the town, the eye finds repose in the pale-green ocean of the rice-fields, relieved here and there by the changing

yellow of slender bamboo shafts and the sombre, immutable green of the pines.

A little lower still, in a chapel of the old temple Rôben-dô, is the portrait of its founder, Rôben-Sojô, in painted wood, carved before his death, eleven hundred and seventy years ago. This is the supreme masterpiece, and there is perhaps no more moving work in the sculpture of all the ages. He is seated very upright, in the simplest attitude: his long, austere face is beautiful in its calm serenity; four lines at the corners of the mouth, and the wrinkles on the forehead, seem to indicate that his life, like so many others, had its storms and conflicts: all the rest is modelled without detail, in large planes, by a firm, decisive chisel. He holds in his delicate, nervous hand a *niô-i* of lacquered wood, slightly crooked at the end, an object very similar to the crozier of our bishops. This particular one is held in special veneration, for it was the founder's own *niô-i*, and was placed in the hand of his effigy after his death. His robe, crossed over at the throat, and leaving the neck bare, is painted red and green; the simplicity of the drapery is analogous to that of the finest antiques. The careful painting of the eye-balls, the subdued crimson of the lips, give extraordinary vivacity to the expression. It is one of the great mysteries of art that after so many centuries a human effigy can thus affirm the truth of its presentment by the little shock of emotion we experience when we come face to face with it.

In this beautiful park, where the temples of To-Daiji cluster so thickly together, there is a

huge building which contains the colossal Buddha, Dai-butsu, one of the largest statues in the world, which was the model for the Buddha of Kamakura. It is made of large bronze plates soldered together on a wooden foundation, and is no less than sixteen metres high. It was erected in 749, and the temple which was to shelter it was built the following year. But successive fires necessitated reconstructions, and the present one dates from the beginning of the eighteenth century. The present head of Buddha, cast by Chinese founders in 1183, as was also the lantern, replaced the original.

*The Shyô-sô-in* (Imperial Treasure).—Protected by a great encircling wall, guarded day and night by sentries, and inaccessible to the curiosity of the passer-by, an immense barn rises in the midst of great trees. I know not how else to describe the venerable building which contains the imperial collections. It stands on strong pillars of masonry, about two metres above the level of the soil. The huge rustic structure, made of rough-hewn pine-logs, is surrounded by a circular gallery, to which three straight staircases give access. It has three heavy doors clamped with iron, and is surmounted by a fine roof, slightly curved, made of strips of wood overlapping each other like slates, which has the rich effect of brown plush. The three doors open into three vast halls, with glass cases along three of their walls. These contain some three thousand miscellaneous objects, marvels sent to the early Mikados from the Chinese emperors by the hands of ambassadors: there are paintings,



lacquers, and weapons on which the infant art of Japan made its first essays with wonderful subtlety; Indian objects which China was already transmitting, and which pilgrims transported; quantities of Sassanide stuffs, glasses (a new material in the Far East), chalcedony cups, and silver and bronze articles which caravans, traversing all Central Asia, brought from the shores of the Mediterranean to Petchili. The treasure is of incalculable value. Constituted in 746 by the Emperor Shyaumou I., who presented it to the temple of To-Darji, it was augmented by his successors, and finally completed in 794 by the Emperor Kwammou, when he decided to abandon Nara, and transfer the court to Kyoto in Yamashiro. Since this period, the Shyô-sô-in, isolated in the middle of the immense park, has fortunately escaped the fires that have devastated Nara. It remains a rare evidence of those remote days, an extraordinary vestige of a solid wooden architecture which has successfully withstood the attacks of time. The well-authenticated dates of its inception and completion, the archives consisting of *makimono* rolls preserved in heavy boxes, the successive inventories with commentaries made by many generations of keepers, make this treasure one of the most precious and trustworthy of sources for the study of the primitive Buddhist art of the Far East, and its successive incursions from India to China, and from China to Japan. We have every hope that the Japanese Government will undertake the indispensable task of publishing an authoritative critical inventory of these relics.

*The Temples of the Plain.*—Some ancient temples still exist in the plain where the old city of Nara once stood; but they are melancholy survivals in the midst of their abandoned parks and crumbling walls. We feel that life has gradually receded from these shrines: the faithful make but rare pilgrimages hither; funds for their preservation are lacking; even their bonzes, deprived of the rich alms of former days, have been reduced to a very scanty number. This neglect makes them perhaps more touching than the popular temples of Nara, and I cannot think without a pang of Yakushi-ji, of Hokkei-ji, of Tosho-daï-ji, as I saw them under the sinister rain of a treacherous autumn, when the great cryptomerias dripped sullenly on the sodden soil under a lowering sky, and the crows flew languidly, with hoarse croakings, from tree to tree.

These old temples still contain some extraordinary specimens of sculpture; and when one comes to certain corners where wooden statues are piled one upon the other, gradually decaying under the leakage of roofs, damp, age, and the attacks of insects, one cannot but mourn that neglect and indifference have condemned so many works of art to death. The museums of Kyoto and Nara have saved a good many; and but for the inactivity of the West, many extraordinary masterpieces might have been acquired some twenty years ago, and might have served to reveal to Europe the glories of one of the most magnificent schools of sculpture the world has known.

The Hokkei-ji has a fine *Kwannon* with many heads, somewhat Hindoo in type, rather short and fat, with strongly marked folds in the flesh, well-cast draperies and airy banderoles, which are rolled round the body, and passing over the arms, fall out again in salient curves; a *Monjū* with a very delicate face, lacquered in black, and seated on a lion painted white, and the very curious statue of *Yokkōbonyū*, a seated figure with the head inclined, the delicate hands emerging from very large sleeves. The technique is extraordinary, the modelling being carried out by means of large sheets of paper, superposed, pressed, pounded, and amalgamated until they took the plastic form desired by the artist. In spite of the difficulties of such a method, this figure is remarkable for its truth and vitality.

The Saider-ji is richer still, with its splendid colossal *Kwannon*. She is standing, with wide ribbons tied behind her ears and hanging over her shoulders; the figure is of the plump Hindoo type, further characterised by slight upturned moustaches; the loose, supple fingers of the left hand hold a large flowering branch. Another, of more slender type, half naked under her painted draperies, is modelled in some light wood. Other sculptures, more human and expressive in character, depict a Heigo-Tenno, seated, cross-legged, with a fat, round face and pointed beard; his big chignon is raised under a cap fastened by two enormous pins, his enamelled eyes sparkle vivaciously, his crossed hands hold a fan, and his robes fall in the stiff folds familiar to us in





the paintings of the Tosa primitives. A seated bonze in painted wood, holding his crozier, has a calm face modelled in large, simple planes. Two figures of Kojo-Bosatsou are no less striking in their verisimilitude: one, his robe crossed in harmonious folds held together by a clasp, has a scourge in his hands; the other, installed in a niche before which incense burns unceasingly, is still more startling, with his round head and strongly marked eyebrows. In the large temple there is a Monjû mounted on a roaring lion, led by an armed guide, and followed by a Yuyma, bowed on his pilgrim's staff—an extraordinarily life-like figure; while a youthful Dozi, with bare breast and clasped hands, is followed by a Jizo, with the calm, gentle face of a bonze. In the centre, on the great platform, a lofty shrine contains a Shaka of natural wood, standing in the act of benediction; he wears a robe folded closely over the breast and strewn with large flowers lightly indicated by touches of gold; his body, clearly indicated under the thin tunic, is long and slender as that of a Byzantine Christ; an enormous mandorla of pierced wood behind him is covered with little seated figures in relief.

The Tosho-dar-ji is one of the most ancient and interesting of the temples that time has spared in Japan. Fire and earthquake have happily respected these fine buildings of the Tempio period. A great rectangular building raised on a platform of masonry, with its heavy columns of red painted wood, its exterior portico, its old gates with medallions formerly painted with

floriated foliage, and huge wooden nails formerly lacquered with gold, gives a good idea of the strongholds of this primitive period. The upper part of the solid columns which, under the portico, are engaged in the wall of this species of *cella*, were once decorated with large foliated ornaments, terminating in lotus-spikes, traces of which are still visible on the wood. The graceful, slightly curved roof bears at each extremity of its crest a sort of helmet composed of horses' heads with long manes, looking at each other. They are called Tô, and were brought from China. Close to the temple are two small wooden buildings on piles, each reproductions of the primitive Japanese house, which is very like a lacustrine dwelling; and the little belfry, the Koro, has an exquisite gallery on the first storey.

Masterpieces of sculpture abound in this beautiful temple. There is an immense *Buddha* seated on the lotus, raising his right hand, webbed between the last three fingers, in benediction; a huge *Kwannon* with thirty-six heads, lacquered all over with gold, and measuring some five to six metres in height. She stands very straight and upright, the splendidly simple folds of her draperies describing superb hollow curves on her legs, and her multiple arms brandish mallets, sceptres, vases, lotus-flowers, shells, caskets, sticks strung with deaths' heads, in every direction. On the other side of the *Buddha* an enormous *Jakusi* lacquered in gold makes the gesture of benediction with extraordinary dignity. The four *Shi-Tennos* surround them, in armour and helmets, all white

and gold, watching over them with menacing gestures and contracted faces. An amazingly savage and heavy *Kwannon* is lacquered black, and has large, weighty folds of stuff over her legs. Two statues of Benten and Taishaku are sublimely noble and simple, with their august gestures of benediction. Their broad faces and heavy eyes, their thick lips and double chins betray, Sino-Hindoo influences. They are heavily draped, and their full robes, drawn in at the waist, and falling in straight folds that festoon a little over the feet in front, curve out in trains behind them.

But the supreme masterpiece is the statue of the priest Gan-ji, preserved in a niche enclosed by curtains of old silk. When they are drawn aside, the spectator is face to face with a startling apparition. He is seated with clasped hands, his thumbs pressed together; his robe is crossed in two large black and red folds upon his breast; his shaven forehead is deeply wrinkled, and under the closed eyelids the pupils are suggested with extraordinary vivacity and sensibility. He was blind, and the veiled eyes are evidently those of a being whose whole life was internal, and who, in the obscurity of this mysterious retreat, placidly prolonged the unfathomable dream, the intoxications of which he had been spared. There is a strange calm on the face, which no earthly emotion seems ever to have ruffled. One has a sense of uneasy shame at having laid a profane hand upon the curtains of the shrine, disturbing by an indiscreet curiosity the touching and eternal dream of the sage.



The temple of Yakushi-ji is the most melancholy of all. It is completely abandoned, and is no longer inhabited even by the two or three bonzes who undertake the care of the others. The custodian, whom it is difficult to discover, lives in a poor hovel some hundreds of yards away. Before penetrating into the building, we have to follow long ancient walls of beaten earth, still surmounted by little tiled roofs. They are interrupted by crumbling porches, which were formerly superb; and when one passes through the old park, where the immense trees are centuries old, one sees many ancient temples now transformed into poor farms.

It must have been one of the richest temples of Yamato, for it contains some extraordinary examples of bronze statuary, unique in Japan, which bear witness to a stupendous skill in the casting of large figures so early as the end of the seventh century. Buddhism had just been revealed to Japan, and we do not yet know if it can claim the honour of these remarkable achievements, or if they must be credited to Corea, the initiator of Japan in many of the industrial arts. On a large base of white marble (unique, perhaps in Japan) is seated a Buddha two and a half metres high in black bronze, sublime in his majesty and simplicity, making the gesture of benediction. The elegance and delicacy of the forms make it very superior to the gods of Nara and Kamakura, and I can recall nothing simpler and more beautiful than the folds of stuff in gilded bronze which cover the seat. The figure is set upon a bronze pedestal





THE KONDO OF KOYA-SAN.



ARCHAIC TERRA-COTTA STATUETTES IN THE TEMPLE OF HORIUJI.  
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with three little steps adorned with admirable bas-reliefs; beneath a kind of arcade divided by a caryatid, are two naked crouching figures with loin cloths round their hips. Their gnome-like ugliness and strangely dressed hair, curled in the Egyptian manner, are in strong contrast with the kingly beauty of the Buddha. Dragons crawl around them; a serpent twines itself round a tortoise. The art with which these details are executed is amazing, and reveals extraordinary skill.

*Nikko-ten* and *Wakko-ten*, who stand beside him, are three metres high; simple and supple folds fall along their graceful bodies in a bronze cascade of supreme nobility; there is an elegance in their grandeur and a character in their beauty which have been attained only in the great epochs of bronze statuary in ancient Greece and in the Italy of the Renaissance. Around these majestic divinities of sombre bronze, the rich patina of which envelops them in soft reflections, the four *Shi-Tennos* of green lacquered and gilded wood, in their rich armour, add a picturesque note of the happiest harmony. In a neighbouring building a colossal bronze *Kwannon* is preserved in a huge shrine. The stiffness of her attitude, the barbaric splendour of the great girdle with pendants falling over her thighs, her high chignon with its tendrils, the wide scarves which undulate from her arms to her legs in a rhythmic cadence, all indicate a remote origin, and justify the traditional attribution to Corea.

Other buildings contain further sculptures in

wood and bronze. The art of Nara was so rich, so unerring, so great, and, in spite of its apparently hieratic character, so subtly varied, that statue follows statue without wearying the spectator or exhausting the store of admiration he dispenses so lavishly.



## CHAPTER XIII

### HORIUJI

The ancient capital—The origins of art and history in Japan  
—The grottoes of Buddha—The Dai-Kodo—Treasures  
of archaic sculpture—Frescoes—The nuns' temple of  
Shinguji, its stuffs and its great statue of Miroku.

THIS plain of Nara is sacred ground, full of the history of the past ; at every step the ruins of ancient buildings still attest its grandeur. They are ranged over the whole expanse, and passing beyond Koriyama, to which the walls of the ancient capital extend, we arrive at Horiuji, a venerable site, before which a Japanese Renan might fitly recite his *Prière sur l'Acropole* in a moment of artistic piety. Horiuji, founded by Shotoku-Taishi in 607, is the most ancient Buddhist temple in Japan. Nowhere can the student better appreciate the starting-point of Japanese art and its close contact with Hindoo art in its first essays.

The entrance is an immense porch, the red columns of which make a slight outward curve in the middle, like Doric columns ; they rest on great flat, undressed stones. Two enormous red and black Niôos on either side seek to impress the visitor by their frantic gesticulations.

The vast airy courtyard, shaded by a few fine

trees, is surrounded by an open paling of laths. The first temple, the "Grottoes of Buddha," contains representations in white stucco and stalactites brought from distant regions, of the grottoes of Shumisen, the fabulous mountain, a sort of Hindoo Olympus. Here, in four compartments, are Monjû and Uima surrounded by gods: Amida with Kwannon, Daiseishi, the entombment of Sakiamuni and his entrance into Nirvâna; in all, there are numbers of little polychrome terra-cotta statuettes of the most extraordinary kind, in attitudes of adoration and prayer, and also of violent despair and vociferous lamentation.

The Dai-Kodo, a little farther back, has sublime beauties to reveal; this again is a sort of *cella* surrounded by a large portico and sustained by solid wooden columns engaged in the walls. In the centre, the great platform, with its stone balustrade, its independent roof, its three hanging canopies of painted wood, forms an inner building: under these canopies, griffins of gilded wood hanging by thin chains seem to be flying in space.

On the huge platform there is a crowd of wonderful statues, which a traditional respect has retained in this spot. In the centre there is an enormous bronze Buddha, which was formerly at the principal entrance, in a little temple since destroyed by fire. He is seated, and holds up a huge, impressive hand in benediction: the seat on which he is enthroned is covered by a heavy drapery in bronze, which falls in broad folds. The serenity and beauty of his head seem still more moving when one looks at him face to face. Two

Bosatsous beside him, rather short, with heavy hands and thick noses, were once splendidly gilded, but have been damaged by fire. It is interesting to compare these colossal bronze statues, the dates of which are well authenticated, and show them to be contemporary with the first ages of the temple of Horiuji, with the statuettes of gilded bronze in the Museum of Ueno at Tokio, some of which bear Japanese inscriptions unquestionably genuine. They have the same rather stunted proportions, over-large hands, flat noses, and crossed folds of drapery characteristic of primitive Japanese art under Sino-Corean influences. A little farther back, two splendid figures of gilded wood, with downcast eyes and banderoles fluttering lightly round them, are more elegant in their slimness and more delicate in their proportions. The same elegance marks a very interesting wooden statue, long of body and rigid of attitude, with a thin face and pointed ears, carrying an urn in his lowered left hand. It is supposed to be of Indian origin, and its curious archaism obviously influenced many similar statues carved in the primitive workshops of Nara, as, for instance, an admirable *Kwannon* of painted wood, standing, and holding a vase with a lotus. The hieratic beauty of the face, the half-closed eyes, the fine proportions, the splendid folds falling at her side in a single cast, invite comparison with the marvellous figures of the Romanesque porch of Chartres Cathedral. The four *Shi-Tennos*, which surround the *Buddha* in the traditional fashion, also have faces ideally calm, which contrast with the violence of their



gestures and the fierceness of their attitudes. They are unique examples of their kind in Japan.

Two objects on the vast platform are famous among the renowned works of the temples of Horiuji : the first is a large reliquary in the form of a little pagoda mounted on a pedestal. Its four wooden panels are decorated with landscapes, animated by figures and flights of birds, painted on a background in harmonious tints ; among these are flashes of a splendid coral red, which reappears on the three double doors of the three sides, decorated with long, slim figures drawn with a fine and elegant line. The colours recall some of the most ancient lacquers said to be from Coromandel, and justify the ancient Hindoo origin attributed to the shrine. The interior, which contains a standing figure of gilded bronze, very Hindoo in type, is covered with slips of gilded and *repoussé* bronze, decorated with over a thousand little symmetrical Buddhas, seated on lotus flowers. The second object is still more remarkable : it is a little altar of gilded bronze, on which is a small Buddha, seated on a spiral lotus-stalk, incomparable in style, with a calm and noble face, and downcast eyes. Two little Bosatsous, short and heavy, attend him. Behind is a vertical plaque, decorated in very low relief, with kneeling or seated figures among undulating banderoles, which envelop them in a harmonious rhythm. These figures have a truly unique grace and charm. According to the tradition, this portable altar was brought from Corea, and given to the mother of the Empress of Shiomou-Tenno, at the beginning of the eighth





Fresco attributed to the Korean painter Doncho,  
in the temple of Horiuji.



century, thus revealing the existence of a highly developed art in China at this period.

The walls of the *cella* of this extraordinary Dai-Kodo are decorated with frescoes painted by the Korean artist Donchô. There are now large fissures into which, thrusting one's finger, one can feel the worm-eaten wood of the substructure, covered with a layer of plaster intended for fresco-painting. It is therefore evident that we are before the primitive wall, and that it has escaped the ravages of fire. The frescoes vary as regards preservation. The outline is drawn in a red-brown tint, heightened with green when the lotus leaves appear. The Buddha is seated on a kind of divan, his legs apart, in the attitude of the consuls on Latin ivory diptychs: his air of strength and authority is amazing. All around him stand figures in armour, with tiaras on their heads: one bare-headed figure in the background, startling in its individuality, appears to be the portrait of a priest. The fine reds, deep blacks, and rosy greys attest the painter's surprising richness of colour, which must have made these faded frescoes equal, in their pristine splendour, to the most famous frescoes or Byzantine mosaics of the same period.

In an adjoining building, raised on high piles, like the Shyô-sô-in, the treasure of the temples of Horiuji is installed, as in a little museum. One of the most precious objects is a *kakemono* representing Shotoku-Taishi seated at a little table, holding up a hand-screen; flowers stand on two other tables on his right, and on his left is a

person in a pink robe, his hair arranged in plaits at the sides of his head. Three other persons lined before him, wearing caps of an ancient shape, and holding flat sticks against their thighs. Tradition declares this painting to be some thirteen hundred years old. Another fine portrait of Shonko-Tsuki represents him at the age of sixteen, standing, in a red robe and a black mantle. His face is always of the conventional iconographic type, round in shape, the hair bound up at the sides; he holds a censer in his hand; a mauve curtain is draped above him. A few of the finest statues of the Goto Temple have been removed and placed here; but the strangest example is a statuette of a many-headed Kwannon, in plain wood, tinted red. Her body is encircled by beaded girdles, and she carries a vase in her hand. She is beautifully proportioned, and so pure and delicate in type, so accurate in detail, that one cannot but believe her to have been the work of some supreme chisel. She is said to date from the seventh century.

The Yumedono, or Temple of Relics, an octagonal building, would repay a visit, even if it had nothing more to show us than the magnificent wooden statue rubbed with gold. The long slender figure, swathed in flat sinuous bands, and holding in both hands the flaming apple, is closely akin to the figure of the principal temple, and recalls the fine Romanesque statues of Chartres in its hieratic beauty.

In addition to these temples of the principal group contains a temple of nuns, the



Shinguji. A little room in this convent has an exquisite decoration of birds of Paradise of every colour, on a gold ground, all flying towards the *tokonoma*. The nuns, with infinite precautions, bring two wonderful pieces of embroidery to a little low platform for the inspection of the visitor. The first, mounted as a *kakemono*, once formed part of a series executed about thirteen hundred and fifty years ago, which decorated the *fusumas* of a whole apartment. The silk is blackened and worn; on it is embroidered, with somewhat tightly drawn threads in slight relief, below, two temples, in one of which a man is striking a bell, and above, under flowers and branches, or at the extremities of long stalks, persons of a Chinese type, seated or walking about in conventional landscapes, or Buddhas enthroned on blue, red, green, yellow, and white lotuses. The second embroidery, also in the form of a *kakemono*, is some five hundred years later in date. It represents Buddha preceded by two Bosatsous descending from the clouds to the cottage of a humble worshipper—a touching composition familiar to the great Chinese artists, who revealed it to the Japanese, and one which Godoshi immortalised in a marvellous *kakemono* now in the Kyoto Museum. A border of birds, peacocks, and flowers, embroidered in yellow silks relieved by deep blacks and greens, is extraordinarily gorgeous and well preserved. It is a masterpiece of its kind, and proves once more that the decorative genius of the Japanese has left no domain of art unexplored, and that in their hands an embroidery may

become as expressive and as sublime in sentiment as the finest picture.

In the prayer-hall of this Temple of the Nuns there is one of the rarest pieces of sculpture in all Japan. Behind a curtain, in a tabernacle, is a great Miroku of dark wood, almost black. The figure and the base are carved in a single block of wood, the head being always carved separately; the pure, serene face is flanked by two flat elongated ears; the hands are very delicate, and the feet, one of which is laid flat on one of the knees, are very aristocratic in shape. In spite of Japanese tradition, which naturally inclines to give the paternity of masterpieces to a celebrity like Shotoku-Taishi, it is difficult to determine the origin of such a work, and to say whether it is Chinese or Japanese.

## CHAPTER XIV

### *THE MUSEUMS OF JAPAN AT TOKIO, KYOTO, AND NARA*

Their creation and organisation—The Tokio Museum—Variety of its collections—The Kyoto Museum, the depôt for the paintings belonging to the treasure of the temples—The Museum of Nara, where the development of Japanese sculpture may be studied.

**I**T is only twenty years ago that the museums of Japan were inaugurated. Their perfect organisation is due to the enlightened mind of Baron Kuki, Director of the Fine Arts at that period. In his character of a privy councillor of the Empire he has never ceased to interest himself in their development.

Like all the museums in the world, they were constituted with a nucleus collection; various objects in this (notably in the case of the Tokio Museum) were the property of the Mikado. Grants from the annual budget gradually increased the collections, though it is much to be regretted that these began somewhat too late, at a time when many admirable things had left Japan to enrich French and American collections. The museums accept deposits and temporary loans from private collectors. One of the happiest decrees in this connection was the law by which temples and



monasteries are compelled to make temporary deposits of all their treasures, notably in the museums of Kyoto and Nara. By this means, these two museums are able to give the public a progressive idea of marvels that would otherwise be ignored by the majority. Special exhibitions are frequently arranged, either to commemorate the birth or the death of a master whose ancient work is shown, or to correspond to the symbol appropriated to each new year. Thus the year of the horse, the pine, or the crane, is inaugurated by an exhibition of works of art, paintings, lacquers, and potteries, in which these symbols figure.

The Tokio Museum is the most important of the three as regards the variety of its series, but it is greatly inferior to the other two in the quality of its paintings and sculptures. It is situated in the park of Ueno, and constructed entirely on the European principle; a large public library, now in process of building, will be connected with it. All the ground floor is occupied by ethnographic and natural history collections. The series of archaic pre-Buddhist potteries found in the soil or in tombs are of great archæological importance. The first floor is devoted to the collections of ancient Japanese art.

The sculptures are numerous, and some are very remarkable. A series of gilded bronze statuettes, presented to the Museum by the Imperial House, is of very great interest. Its numerous examples enable the student to observe the subtle modifications to which the representation of Buddha was subjected in ancient times, an iconographic study





KWANNON IN LACQUERED WOOD, TOKIO MUSEUM.



comparable to that of our sculptured Madonnas of the Middle Ages. There are some thirty of these figures, seated or standing, with bare breasts and heavy pendant necklaces; some give the benediction with uplifted hand, others meditate, their elbows on their knees and their chins on their hands. The types vary: the faces in some examples are plump and thick, but noble in character, and closely akin to their Hindoo prototypes; in others the more delicate and elongated type, with a longer, thinner nose seems to indicate the evolution of a more intimately Japanese type. Some of these were lent to the organisers of the Exhibition of 1900 in Paris, and were to be studied in the Japanese Pavilion at the Trocadero.

Some fine statues of painted or lacquered wood preserved here reveal the plastic grandeur of this calm, pure sculpture in the representations of Buddha, where the artist shows such mastery in the indication of proportions and masses, in the drapery of supple materials, in the fall of the folds, and the rhythmic undulation of banderoles. With what admirable reserve and moderation is gesture indicated: the august gesture of benediction, where the amazing vivacity of the fingers reveals all the expressive spirit which the races of the Far East give to this mute language; the gesture of infinite lassitude in meditation, where the soul withdraws into itself, delivered from the bonds of the flesh and its desires. What elegance these great sculptors have bestowed on all the figures that emanated from Buddha, those Kwannons, to which the Japanese spirit has given so much

sweetness and distinction. On the other hand, what amazing movement they lent to the Devas, those deities of heaven whose terrible gestures menace and terrify the rebellious! Finally, what a profound sense of individual character, what a love of truth and life manifest themselves in the numerous portraits of priests and saints, creations marked by a discreet and moving realism unsurpassed in any art.

A wooden statue from the Imperial collections is a rare and curious relic; it is roughly executed, and is extremely flat and thin, with a long, broad face and a very Romanesque rigidity. The art has little subtlety; it is evidently one of the first lisplings of Japanese art, if, indeed, as some contend, it is not a Corean figure. A large seated figure with one leg crossed is a nobler creation: it is composed of that amalgam of paper and wood-fibres, pressed and pounded and finally lacquered, which was a favourite material in the early centuries. This is a superb example, with broadly treated folds of drapery. A large Buddha seated on a lotus has delicate arms and a finely modelled back. A supple scarf, passing from the left shoulder under the right arm, is tied upon the breast (ninth century). A charming figure of Avalokiteswara, standing, in a very supple attitude, with an inexpressive face and downcast eyes, her drapery falling in simple folds, is exquisite in its proportions, and reveals the fine art of the tenth century. Another, close beside her, charming with her glass eyes, her closely pleated skirt, her sinuous scarves, shows that the art of the Ashikagas



of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries inclined, above all, to grace and charm.

Two statuettes from the pagoda of Horiuji, of white clay, dried and painted, are good examples of those expressive archaic figurines, the remarkable specimens of which in the Horiuji temple I have already noted.

There is, further, a prodigious collection of those great wooden masks, both plain and painted, in which the primitive sculptors displayed their masterly and grandiose energy. They were handed over to the museum by the temple of Horiuji, on the registers of which they are inscribed. The earliest, of the Tempio epoch, are of unpainted wood; the strange masks of the sacred dance of Gigaku were lacquered. These latter are of an essentially comic character; the more dramatic ones were known as Bugaku. There is, further, a long series of fine Nô masks, lacquered in white or coloured, grimacing, comic, calm, or agonised, in which artists fixed all the varied expressions of human emotion from the end of the twelfth to the eighteenth century.

The collection of paintings in the Museum of Ueno is comparatively poor, and in no sense representative of the immense development of Chinese and Japanese painting. Indeed, in all these three museums the method of exhibition differs entirely from ours. Hitherto, they have made no attempt to show the evolution of their art from its Buddhist origin to the most recent manifestations of its popular schools, by means of a certain number of carefully chosen works.

They do not as yet possess a sufficient variety of works to arrange collections definitively in this fashion; the *kakemonos* and screens they contain are only deposited temporarily by the temples to which they belong, and they are presented to the public without method or classification. The visitor has to enjoy them after the manner of a bee sipping at flower after flower.

But the Ueno Museum possesses a *Fugen Bosatsu* seated on a lotus borne by a white elephant with a saddle, which has a wonderful charm of design and colour, and is one of the finest specimens of art at the beginning of the Fujiwara dynasty in the tenth century. It also boasts four extraordinary *makimonos* drawn in black by the priest Toba-Sojo, who, in the thirteenth century, invented a formula of black-and-white drawing, so extravagantly fantastic, so audacious and novel in its vigour, that the student must overleap several centuries and continents to find a parallel in the art of our most modern caricaturists. There are cock-fights, bulls goring one another, rabbits, and monkeys, the masterly drollery of which is still unrivalled. No less precious is an album of washed drawings by Okio, of insects, hornets, flies, moths, and butterflies, sprays of flowers, wistaria, fern-fronds, and birds, which reveal the most scrupulous artistic conscience, leaving nothing to improvisation or fancy, and showing what depths of patient labour underlie the works that seem to us airy and spontaneous exercises of memory.

The collection of pottery is fairly good, but has

no very rare or precious specimens. It is, however, properly classified, and offers the student a considerable number of significant types.

The collection of lacquers is very superior in quality. Thanks to the generosity of the Imperial House, it contains some marvellous boxes of the earliest periods. I have never seen anything more wonderful in this genre than two large rectangular boxes of the tenth century in black lacquer decorated with silver, one with a dragon twined round a pillar of fire and guarded by two divinities standing on either side, and the other with floriated spirals and birds. There are also two marvellous boxes, dating from the Kamakura period, mounted on six low feet, and decorated with gold branches and flocks of cranes in silver on a black ground. A black box has a fine inscription on the back of the cover, and the date 1228. The decoration is in the manner of the ancient school of Tosa; a red torii rises between pines from a ground of rough pewter, under a flight of cranes executed in thin strips of pewter.

The Museum of Kyoto is a long way from the centre of the town, on the left bank of the Kamogawa, in the middle of a great garden. It consists of a one-storeyed building raised from the ground by a few steps. Its great interest centres in the fine sculptures deposited here permanently and definitively, it may be said, for they are not likely to return to the temples to which they belong, and the splendid paintings, which are here only provisionally, and succeed



each other in relays almost week by week. The great central sculpture hall is not, unfortunately, very perfectly lighted, and the large statues are preserved in huge glazed cases too high for the comfort of the visitor.

The great seated *Buddha* in gilded and lacquered wood from the Manjuji of Kyoto which occupies the centre of the hall is by the priest Genshin (835); the fine statue of a seated priest from the Kyogo-Gokokuji is said to be of the same period. The *Nyoirin-Kwanze-on*, from the Rosanji of Kyoto, a wooden statue, the gilding of which has perished, must be very archaic; she is seated, one leg bent upon her knee, her chin in her hand; she has large thick feet, a huge cap, and a great mantle which envelops her completely, falling in heavy fluted folds on the seat. This figure is very Hindoo in character, and closely akin to the little bronzes of the Imperial House preserved in the Tokio Museum. Another figure that shows this Hindoo character is the fine seated *Kwannon* of gilded wood, meditating, her head slightly inclined, her chin in her hand, which was presented to the temple of Horiuji by the Prince of Kudara. Another *Kwannon*, a superb and noble figure, tall and slender, holding up the lotus in one hand, was carved, according to the inscription, in 1226, by the famous Jokei, and repaired in 1817. A more ancient example shows the goddess standing, with many hands, and is said to have been executed by Jocho in 1053; he is also the reputed author of four Devas in white and gold lacquer, sturdy figures, gesticulating





fiercely among the tumultuous folds of their draperies, which flutter in the wind. There are, further, some splendid examples of Unkei, the great master of the thirteenth century: four of the guardian gods of Kwannon (the other ten remain under the long portico of the temple of Renge-oin); a fine cymbal-player, standing, in a robe with a long train; an extraordinary Mawa-Rajo, with his old woman's head, his great pagoda sleeves, his shoes with turned-up points: he prays with clasped hands and compressed lips and a truly sublime expression. Then there is Unkei himself, and Tankei, another priest; they are both seated, their rosaries in their hands, their glass eyes fixed with an extraordinarily penetrating gaze upon life. A beautiful *Heijokai*, seated a little to one side amidst the superbly supple folds of his robe, and making the ritual sign with the outspread fingers of both hands, is also ascribed to Unkei. Another figure impossible to forget is the admirable painted wooden statue by Baso Sennin. It is half naked, fleshless and haggard as a Hindoo fakir, a handkerchief bound round the head. In energy of handling, *furia* of execution, and austerity of character, it will bear comparison with the finest of Donatello's statues of St. John the Baptist. The inscription gives the name of the sculptor, and the date, 1605.

A series of twenty masks of painted wood (green, red, pink, and golden) make an interesting mention in their inscriptions of two repairs they underwent for the services of the pagoda of Jô-ji in 1016 and 1334.

of drapery, with their fine faces intent in the effort of thought, and the mystery of prayer, the eloquent gestures of their expressive hands, and their rich and velvety tones, green, brown, and blue. Tradition says that they were brought from China in 986 by the priest Chōnen.

Sekikaku, another great master, painted in 963 the two ascetics meditating, one leaning against a tiger, the other with his chin in his hand. The execution is swift and impulsive; the stuffs are indicated by broad black strokes, dashed on to the surface boldly and impatiently, the grey background is "left" in the heads, and heightened by little faint hatchings, while the tiger is the most startling achievement in the rendering of fur (temple of Sho-ho-ji).

The portraits of these great Chinese masters, of whom we know nothing, are no less amazing. I may cite the portrait of the Chinese priest Gendō (seventh century) by himself. He is represented standing, with folded hands, his lips parted in prayer, his gentle face rendered by infinitely subtle touches; he is robed in a mantle of dark violet, ornamented with foliage and flowers in gold, so delicate that it must have been works like this which influenced the Buddhist figure-painters of the Kamakura epoch (temple of Chion-ji). The great Chinese precursors indeed make themselves felt everywhere, as, for instance, in the fleshy red flower encircled by leaves, and modelled with wonderful mastery, which Chūkiō (end of the Song Dynasty) painted that it might be studied and repeated later by Koyetsu in the temple of

Conscious as I am of the insufficiency of the ten or twelve visits I was able to pay either to the exhibited works, or to those held in reserve,<sup>1</sup> I hesitate as to what I shall quote among the innumerable paintings that have passed into the Kyoto Museum. Never can I forget the extraordinary impression made upon me by a work of the ancient Chinese painter, Omakitsu, of the tenth century (Tang Dynasty), belonging to the Chi-Jakuin of Kyoto. It is a painting in black, occupying the entire height of the *kakemono*: a cataract falls in a straight line between two enormous walls of rock; little trees cling desperately to their inaccessible surfaces, and to the right, in a narrow space, strange clouds roll across the sky, driven by terrific gales, and rendered by little furious touches of the brush. What words can suggest the eternal element in the work, the savage vision of some of the overwhelming elementary forces of nature, and the rapid, impetuous handling, adequately expressing the emotion by which the soul of the sublime artist was convulsed? Yet this work was executed at the other extremity of our world seven hundred years before Ruysdael and his group first attempted (how tamely and coldly in comparison!) to render natural phenomena of this kind. Sixteen Chinese paintings of Rakkans from the Seiryō-ji are certainly the finest I know for vigour of design and nobility

<sup>1</sup> I cannot too strongly recommend those who are specially interested in Japanese art to consult the magnificent publication, *The Relics of Japan* (published by Tajima, Tokio), and the old art-review of Tokio, the *Kokko*.



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Hompô-ji, where the latter became acquainted with it. Two superb hermits, Gamma and Tekkai, remarkable for their firm and emphatic drawing, were painted by the famous Ganki.

The student would be glad to accept the magnificent *Monjû* ascribed to the great Chinese painter Godoshi (eighth century) without reserve. The beauty of the work almost justifies such confidence; but in this Far East, where copies are so extraordinarily skilful, he hesitates; yet could there be anything more perfect of its kind than this ideal head with its golden halo (*Eigen ji aichigun-Omi*)? Another example, still more amazing, comes from the Tofukuji.

One of the most moving works of the primitive Japanese school is an immense *kakemono* representing Buddha descending from heaven on a cloud. To the left are vast sombre abysses, with fantastic peaks adorned with stray shrubs bearing pink and white blossoms. Above them, diagonally disposed, is an immense white cloud, on which the celestial cohorts of Apsaras descend, preceding or following Buddha: they are clad in fine gold tissues and some have rose-coloured girdles. In front are the incense bearers; others dance and sing on the dais on which the god is seated; a figure bearing a tambourine on a tray advances from the background. All these heavenly personages descend slowly, and the god makes his way to the right to a little kiosk, where he will receive the soul of the believer who awaits him. This very spiritual work is attributed to the priest Genshin or Eshin-Sozû, abbot of the temple of



WOODEN STATUE FROM  
THE TEMPLE OF SHIN  
YAKUSHI-JI, NARA  
MUSEUM.



WOODEN BAS-RELIEF FROM  
THE TEMPLE OF KOFU-  
KUJI, NARA MUSEUM.



STATUE OF LACQUERED  
WOOD, FROM THE  
TEMPLE OF KOFUKUJI,  
NARA MUSEUM.



WOODEN STATUE FROM  
THE TEMPLE OF  
KOFUKUJI, NARA  
MUSEUM.





Eshin-in, where he is said to have died in 1017. It belongs to the temple of Chion-in at Kyoto.

A landscape by Chodensu (the only one by him extant) is not only a rare curiosity, but a precious work of art. It represents a mountain, a torrent, and a little kiosque, with tree-tops emerging from a mist. The execution is rich, velvety, spontaneous, and full of emphasis.

Two landscapes by Sesshin are among the finest that exist. What wonderful variety of gradation he gave to the touches of Indian ink with which he indicated the trees and rocks, the little pagodas of the background, the planes of the cliffs! Three others by Oguri-Sotan, a little rubbed, though the tones have retained their values, are wonderful in the depths and reliefs of their blacks. One represents a woodman seated and reading; another a woman on horseback playing the *biwa*, and the last a man in a large straw hat followed by a child in a snowy landscape. Their garments of yellow and pale pink strike a discreet chord of great distinction among the fine blacks (temple of Mioshin-ji).

Motonobou's twelve famous *fusumas* are also exhibited. They represent waves and rocks on a background of brownish gold, a composition of incredible audacity, dated 1559.

Then there is Masanobou's masterpiece in black and white, the splendid screen, with the great tree. Two birds cling to the trunk; a river runs to the right, and a large crane feeds in the foreground (Daitoku-ji).

It will not be easy to forget the series of

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*makimonos* by Nobuzane (1256), vigorous in tone and powerful in drawing, and the memorable composition of Mijizane descending the river with the rowers bending to the oars.

The Nara Museum cannot certainly be compared with that of Kyoto in respect of the paintings deposited in it. The great treasures of this genre were evidently the property of the temples of Kyoto, and we must look to Kyoto as the place where an intelligent organisation will reveal them to the public in succession. But Nara claims the first place as the shrine of sculpture, for it was round the old capital that the first great workshops of the wood-carvers and bronze-founders were set up on the introduction of Buddhism, to give form to all the noble visions which the new religion offered. There are a sufficient number of these early statues in the museum to furnish a clear appreciation of one of the greatest plastic periods in history.

The museum, consisting of a single storey raised above the ground, is in the park, adjoining the forest, in a calm, fresh atmosphere very favourable to the pure impressions the student comes to seek.

Among the paintings, one of the most remarkable is a fine portrait of Shotoku-Taishi, the Regent of the Empire, who introduced Buddhism into Japan. He is seated, in a wide yellow and greenish mantle with a red scarf, holding his perfume-burner; his face is round and the lips touched with red; ten persons are shown in adoration or entreaty (temple of Horyu-ji, Nara). In the

series of representations of Shotoku-Taishi, there are some examples which seem to be earlier than this, those, for instance, in the temple of Horiuji, that in Baron Kuki's collection, and even that in the Louvre.

A *Kisho-o-Tenn* (temple of Yakushi-ji) painted on very fine canvas, is a notable work. Her action as she walks gives a graceful swing to her green skirt with its red lozenges; she has flowers in her hair; her rounded face with its black hair and strongly marked eyebrows has a very feminine charm, and recalls the famous figure on the screen at Shiô-Soin, no doubt a contemporary work. On the back is the following inscription: "Second year of Hotokou, remounted four hundred and sixty years ago."

There are some fine portraits of priests, evidently very faithful in their realism. But the most important work exhibited in the Nara Museum in 1906 was the series of three *makimonos* by Toba Sojo (temple of Shigi-San, Yamato), an extraordinary effort of imaginative raillery, of swift and spontaneous drawing. The execution is as broad as the artist's vision of things, and presupposes a knowledge and facility perfectly amazing in the remote period (tenth century) when this gifted painter flourished, the true ancestor of our Forain.

A Saint (Myoren) descends a mountain-road on a black horse with a red saddle, admirable in colour and true and broad in drawing. We then see attendants removing the saddle and installing the saint in a house, where food is brought to him. He continues his journey, meeting peasants and



washerwomen, who make their way to the river ; he crosses a herd of deer in the mountains. The second *makimono*, the painting of which is still richer, and which has been ascribed to Mitsunaga, depicts delicious landscapes with horsemen, in which the beautiful art of the ancient school of Tosa is revealed. The third scroll contains scenes of frenzied animation, groups of dishevelled men and women dancing and vociferating with extraordinary vigour and vitality.

But we must rather devote our attention to the sculpture here. All the sublime art of Yamato will pass in review before us, beginning with the stiff, hieratic icons, hardly distinguishable from their Hindoo prototypes, if, indeed, some of them are not Indian importations. Such was the origin, according to tradition, of a *Kokuzo Bosatsu* of coloured wood (from the Ikomagun of Horiuji), a straight figure, innocent of hips, with a long flat face, long pointed ears, blunt features, and thick lips. The naked torso is girded round the waist by a skirt falling in straight folds to the feet, the left hand grasps a bottle by the neck, and the palm of the right is extended horizontally. Whatever its origin, it must have been wooden figures of this type which inspired the first Japanese founders of the bronze figurines presented to the Tokio Museum by the Imperial House.

With the *Juichi-men-Kanzeon Bosatsu*, from Yakushi-ji, a slight indication of the hips becomes perceptible. He stands, holding up a vase with the left hand and extending his right palm ; he is draped, and the stuff leaves the right shoulder



WOODEN STATUE FROM  
THE TEMPLE OF KOFU-  
KUJI, NARA MUSEUM.



BRONZE STATUETTE IN  
THE HINDOO STYLE,  
NARA MUSEUM.



WOODEN STATUETTE OF  
PRINCE SHOTOKU-  
TA ISHI AS A CHILD.  
NARA MUSEUM.



WOODEN STATUE FROM  
THE TEMPLE OF KOFU-  
KUJI, NARA MUSEUM.



bare and passes over the left shoulder. The proportions are good ; the large flat face is of the Hindoo type. The drapery is rather more studied and complex, with double folds over the legs, but the proportions are shorter and the legs slightly bowed in a very similar figure of coloured wood (from the Akishino-dera-Yamato) ascribed to the sculptor Annami (twelfth century). The *Kanzeon Bosatsu* (from the Daian-ji-Yamato) is frankly Hindoo in character. His bare breast is hung with jewelled necklaces ; the skirt falls in undulations over the hips, leaving the ankles bare ; the scarf is straight and simple ; the face shows a dawning animation. Two delicate statuettes in lacquered and gilded wood (from Horiuji) are equally Hindoo in type. They represent *Monjû* and *Fugen* standing on the lotus somewhat stiffly, with straight skirts and plain scarves falling simply from the shoulders ; large necklaces with pendants and tassels fasten with a clasp on the stomach.

But in all epochs, even the earliest, we shall find the Japanese genius eager to shake off the yoke of hieratic convention that checked its inspiration, and to render life : this is the instinct of the race. Extraordinary full-length statues soon appeared, the size of life (Japanese life). Here are four of the ten great disciples of Sakya, in the manner peculiar to the early Japanese sculptors, who, after carving a figure in wood, covered it with a thick canvas, which they finally lacquered. The archives of Kofukuji, the temple to which they belong



the name of their author, the gifted priest Mondoshi, who executed them at the end of the eighth century. *Rakonz*, a gentle and ingenuous figure, with closed eyes, is draped in an ample cloak with black stripes, falling in supple folds over a red skirt; he wears wooden shoes, turned up at the toes. *Furona* is a figure in which the antique sentiment of the finest Greek statues appears: the mouth is somewhat full, the eyes widely opened, the naked feet display their admirable modelling in plaited wooden sandals, the breast is bare, the ribs well indicated and also cunningly modelled; a mantle passes over the left arm in superb transversal folds. *Kusen-en*, with a round head, chubby face, and bare feet in sandals, is draped in a full mantle, from which the supple left hand emerges. *Shubodai* is the most expressive of all: he is speaking with a very mournful air; the teeth are visible between the parted lips; his mantle has slipped from his bare shoulder, and, passing from the hip over the left wrist, falls in folds no sculptor has surpassed in nobility. These statues are strangely moving in their grand simplicity, achieving as they do the expression of spiritual life, beauty of drapery and attitude, and a general verity so absolute that no ethnic barriers interpose between our emotion and theirs.

Side by side with these thinkers we find types of the virile martial spirit in the five admirable figures of the *Bashus of Tenryu* (from Kofukuji), also ascribed to the priest Mondoshi, whose name must be included among those of the world's greatest sculptors. They wear helmets and

armour, and some have scarves round their loins ; they are painted, and lacquered in black and gold in rich tones, to which time has added its harmonious patina. No more exquisite visions of art can be imagined.

Shall we ever know the history of these extraordinary artists who, in the shade of temple and monastery, laid hold on the most exquisite forms of art that the human brain has ever invented ? Who was that Kukai of Kofukuji, who in the first half of the ninth century carved the great and terrible figure of *Jikoku-Tenno* in armour, brandishing a sword with threatening eyes, and the five figures of the *Guardian Gods of Yekushi*, slabs in rather high relief, cut in the wood and pierced for fixing on a background, demoniac figures, convulsed in their movement, with somewhat complicated draperies, but full of vigour and emphasis ?

The same temple also contributed the four royal Devas in gilded and lacquered wood, trampling on demons. They are somewhat short and massive, but wonderfully powerful, with their outstretched arms, their swelling muscles, their clenched fists and contracted features—images of irresistible strength. On the edge of one of the pedestals is this inscription : "Made in the fourth year of the Suriaku era (792) and repaired in 1386 by a priest of the temple."

Jo-cho (eleventh century) is the reputed sculptor of the *Saka Nyorai* of black painted wood, formerly gilded, with a very benevolent face, his right hand upraised in benediction, his breast bare under a robe that falls in fine folds.

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Another marvellous artist manifests himself in that Jokei (eleventh and twelfth centuries) who carved the Huima Koji of painted wood at Hofukuji, a figure of painted wood, seated, sceptre in hand, and speaking with a startling intensity of vitality. Another and milder version (from Hokkei-ji), the mouth and eyes of which are marvels of frank and precise execution, was exhibited in Paris in 1900.

Who, again, was Teikei, that great artist of Kasuga, who, working at Kenkyuera at the extreme end of the twelfth century, carved the two prodigious Niôo of painted wood, half-naked figures with salient muscles and breast bones, magnificent examples of learned anatomy, the faces and hands marked by unusual vivacity of expression?

Another splendid statue is that of the Indian priest Muchaku, whose fat figure is so life-like, with his thick features, and prominent forehead; his robe is draped like a toga, and he might well pass for an antique Roman work. Again, here is the god Emma-ô, king of hell (from the temple of Byaku-go-ji), with an enormous body, seated, and vociferating terrible words, which are emphasised by his terrific glass eyes. His right hand grasps the Buddhist text on a broad slab of wood. An inscription gives the date 1495.

There are yet other masterpieces in the Museum of Nara. I may name, in conclusion, the exquisite statuettes of the youthful Shotoku: one shows him standing, swathed in a robe too long for him, his hands clasped in prayer; another, kneeling, his hands extended, with a round, innocent, cherubic





SCREEN PAINTED BY MATAHEI, KYOTO  
MUSEUM (SIXTEENTH CENTURY).



BRONZE GONG, NARA  
MUSEUM.



PAINTING OF THE SCHOOL OF TOSA,  
NARA MUSEUM.



face—works comparable in their freshness to those of the early Italian Renaissance. A strange work of the thirteenth century by Hokkyo Koben is a demon round whom a serpent is coiled, with a lantern on his head; and, among many other things which make the Museum of Nara one of the richest treasures of sculpture in the world, is a curious musical instrument in bronze, formed of a lion supporting a stem round which are twined four dragons, encircling a hanging gong.





## CONCLUSION

I KNOW not whether I have been able in the foregoing pages to suggest some of those aspects of the country which the visitor finds so enchanting. These aspects are numerous, and no country is more interesting to study at the present day than Japan. The landscape is always fascinating, rural, smiling, and animated, rarely savage or grandiose, save in certain regions about the sublime Fuji. This is due, no doubt, to the fact that Japan is densely populated and intensively cultivated, so that no inch of ground, so to speak, is allowed to lie fallow. Nowhere is the density of the population more apparent than in the great plains adjacent to Osaka, where at certain seasons of the year, when the rice is sown or reaped, all the people seem to be swarming to help in the labour of the fields.

For those who are specially interested in historical questions, could there be a more absorbing problem than the present evolution of this nation, but yesterday in the fetters of feudalism, now embarked on all the hazards of parliamentary and industrial enterprises, oscillating between the most profound attachment to its national traditions and the proudest and most frantic desire to be "in the movement"?

For those, finally, whose warmest enthusiasms

are reserved for Art, is there a people whose life, from their earliest origin, has been more impregnated with art, and who have felt a more intimate need of it?

Art is everywhere: in Nature, which the Japanese has bowed to his caprice or his taste; in the house, which, even when of the humblest description, bears a special artistic impress, and is always adorned by some beautiful thing which the inhabitant can contemplate and caress at his ease; in the commonest and most personal objects which always reveal exquisite fancy and delicate taste. If we turn to the loftier summits of Art—to Painting and Sculpture—we are amazed at those characteristics of beauty, nobility, and style which make the art of Japan equal to the greatest art of humanity.

It will be many years yet before these truths become evident; many cultivated Europeans will have to undertake this distant journey first, for Japanese art can never be properly understood and appreciated save in Japan. The West will always lack the elements proper to its manifestation.

But there is little indeed to dread in the difficulties of such a pilgrimage; facilities of transport and all the commodities of life make it easy, while the public spirit of the Japanese makes them emphasise the affability of a welcome which is not the least of the seductions their country offers to the traveller.

THE END

## GLOSSARY

### A

- AMIDA. Divinity inhabiting a Paradise in the West, the type of illimitable intelligence.  
ASHIKAGA. Dynasty of Shôguns who usurped supreme power from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century.

### B

- BAËN. Chinese painter, Guen Dynasty, thirteenth century.  
BENTEN. One of the seven gods of happiness.  
BIWA. An ancient musical instrument like a guitar.  
BONTEN. The Japanese name for Brahma.  
BOSATSO. Generic name for a large category of Buddhist saints, who are obliged to take on human incarnations before attaining Nirvâna.  
BUKAU. A Buddhist divinity.  
BUSSON. Japanese painter (1715-1783).

### C

- CHÂ-JIN. A tea-lover.  
CHÂ-KAI. A gathering under pretext of drinking tea.  
CHÂ-NO-YOU. Tea-ceremonial.  
CHÂ-SÉKI. Room for the tea-ceremonial.  
CHO SHIKIO. Chinese painter, Song Dynasty, eleventh century.  
CHODENSU (Minshô). 1351-1431, great Japanese painter.  
CRYPTOMERIAS. Trees of the cedar family.

## D

- DAI BUTSU. Great Buddha.  
DAIMIOS. Feudal nobles.  
DEVAS. Royal guardians of the gods.  
DHARMA. Hindoo patriarch, deified sixth century.  
DÔ-JI. Buddhist deity.

## E

- EITOKOU. Painter of the Kano School (1543-1590).

## F

- FUGEN. Buddhist deity of ecstatic meditation, generally represented on the right of Sakia-Muni.  
FUJIWARA. Powerful feudal family, which usurped supreme power before the Shôguns.  
FUSUMA. Paper panel in walls and screens.

## G

- GANKI. Famous Chinese painter, Guen Dynasty (beginning of the fourteenth century).  
GODOSHI. Famous Chinese painter (eighth century).  
GUEN. Chinese Dynasty (1280-1367).

## H

- HIDEYOSHI. General in the service of Nobunaga, afterwards regent of the empire when he had taken possession of Kyoto (1536-1598).  
HINOCHI. Species of cedar.  
HIROSHIGHÉ. Great painter and engraver (1786-1858).  
HOJÓ. Feudal family, descended from the Taira, who resisted the first Minamoto Shôguns in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.  
HOKSAI. Great painter and engraver (1760-1849).  
HOTEL. One of the seven gods of happiness.



KASUGA. School of painting at Yamato at the end of the eleventh century.

KOBO-DAISHI. The most famous of the Buddhist saints of Japan (774-834).

KOBORI-ENSHU (1577-1645). Noble at the court of Hideyoshi, who codified the tea-ceremonial and formulated the art of arranging flowers.

KOGO. A little box with a lid.

KOI (Kano). Painter of the Kano School, also known as Sadanobou (1597-1673).

KOVO-SAN. One of the mountains of the province of Yoshino, on which is a group of ancient monkish institutions, founded in 816 by Kobo-Daishi.

KUJAKŪ-MIŌO. Buddhist divinity.

KURA. Space enclosed in walls of masonry, in which precious objects are preserved.

KWANNON. The goddess of mercy.

## M

MAKIMONO. Long strip of silk covered with designs in body-colour, which is rolled on a stick.

MASANOBOU. Great Japanese painter (fourteenth century).

MATAHEI. Japanese painter, founder of the School of Ōo-Kiyoye (end of sixteenth century).

MIEIDŌ. Temple of Koya-San.

MINAMOTO. The most illustrious of the feudal houses of Japan, the progenitors of the three dynasties of Shōguns (native of Kamakura in the twelfth century).

MIROKU. The successor of Buddha, whose coming is predicted (5,000 years after the entrance of Buddha into Nirvāṇa).

MITSUOKI. Painter of the Tosa School (fifteenth century).

MITSUSASHI. Stoneware water-jar.

- TAKUMA. School of painting derived from the School of Kosé Kanaoka, in the second half of the eleventh century.
- TAMBA. District of potters in the sixteenth century.
- TANYU. Painter of the Kano School, also known as Morinobu (1601-1674).
- TCHOSEN. Japanese name for Corea.
- TCHOUKOUAN. Painter of the Soga School (end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries).
- TOKOUGAWA. Dynasty of Shōguns, descended from the Minamoto, the chief of whom was Ieyasu (1603-1869).
- TOSA, SCHOOL OF. School of painting descended from Tsunetaka (*circa* 1230).
- TOYOKOUNI. Painter and engraver in the first half of the nineteenth century.
- TSUNENOBOU. Japanese painter of the Kano School (1635-1713).

## Y

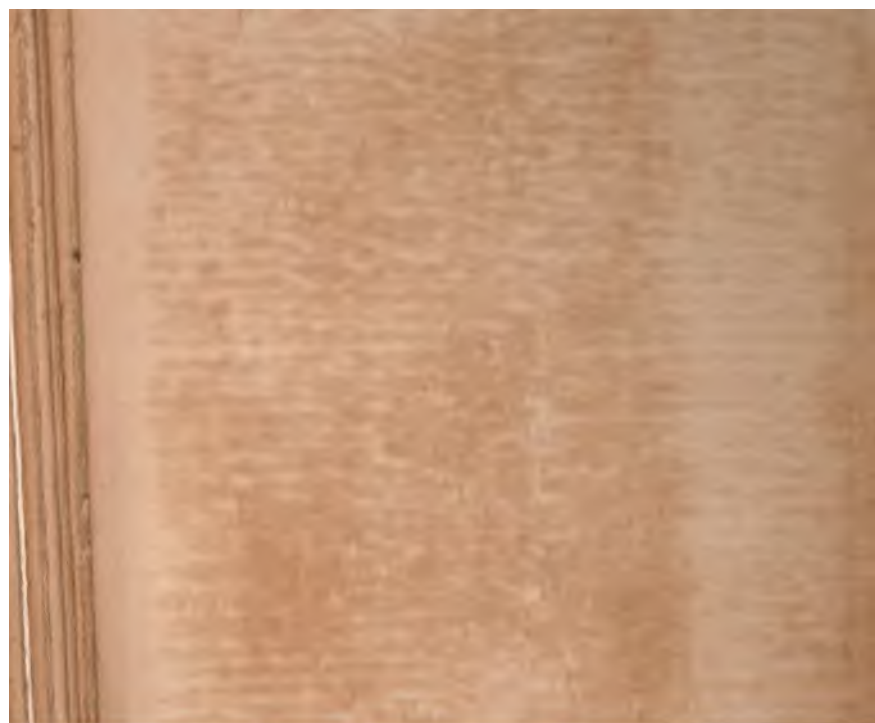
- YASUNOBU. Japanese painter of the School of the Kano (1608-1683).
- YORITOMO (Minamoto). Noble of the feudal family of Minamoto, founder of the Shōgunate in 1192.
- YOSHIMITSU (Ashikaga). One of the most famous Shōguns of the Ashikaga (1380-1408).
- YUSHO. Japanese painter of the Kano School (1615).

## S

- SAKIA-MUNI. Founder of Buddhism, also called Gautama or Buddha in India, born about 653 B.C.
- SENNINS. The genii of Taoism.
- SESSHU. Great Japanese painter (1420-1507).
- SESSON. Great Japanese painter (*circa* 1570).
- SHAMISER. Musical instrument in the shape of a guitar, probably imported from Manilla about 1700.
- SHINGON. One of the four principal religious sects of Japan, of Chinese origin.
- SHINTO. The primitive religion of the Japanese.
- SHI-TENNO. The four kings of heaven, who defend the world against the attacks of demons.
- SHOGA (Takuma). Japanese painter (*circa* 1204).
- SHÔGUNS. Chiefs of the military caste, who from the twelfth century onwards governed the Empire in the name of the Mikado (1190-1867).
- SHOTOKU-TAISHI. Son of the Emperor Yomei and regent of the Empire under the Empress Suiko (572-621).
- SHUM-BOKU. Painter and engraver of the sixteenth century.
- SOÂMI. Japanese painter (second half of the fifteenth century).
- SONG. Chinese Dynasty (960-1126).
- SÔTAU (Oguri). Painter of the Shûbûn School (second half of the fifteenth century).
- SUMIYOSHI. Japanese painter of the Tosa School.

## T

- TAIKO. Military title of Hideyoshi.
- TAIRA. Illustrious military clan, of imperial origin, who resisted the Minamoto in the twelfth century.
- TAISHAKU. Japanese name for Indra.





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